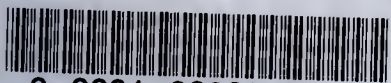


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Lesson of life, and other poem



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THE LESSON OF LIFE,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

THE
LESSON OF LIFE

AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY
GEORGE H. BOKER.



PHILADELPHIA:
GEORGE S. APPLETON, 148 CHESNUT STREET.
1848.

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Parnepacker

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ABRAHAM

YERGEN

P R E L U D E.

PRELUDE.



NOT mine to soar among those birds of Song
That wheel in grandeur 'bove Parnassus' Hill;
Or light by Helicon, their wearied wings
Refreshing with invigorating draughts;
Or, from the summit, with repeated notes
Wake the lethargic multitudes to life,
And make them turn their wondering eyes upon
Those dazzling hill tops, brightened by a song;
Whose soft, persuasive melodies compel
Our pliant natures to the mould they wish,

And, like Creators, shape the yielding clay
To any form their loveliness puts on.
No, but upon some low thatched cottage roof,
Or tree that neighbours to a flowing stream ;
Or by the wayside perched, in thicket hid,
Where wind the lowing kine their moody way,
With melancholy visage passing slow,
At peep of day, along their dewy road,
There will I pour my unpretending song :
Which, 'chance, may please the bustling milk
 maid's ear,
Or idle clown's resting with vacant thoughts—
More easily pleased—hard by my lowly seat.
Perchance, like young Endymion, to be pierced
By brutal archers bent on deeds of woe,
And all the current of my tender lays
Choked in my throat by my own gushing blood,
Ere uttered half, and unoffending quite.
But I am formed of stouter mould than he,
No tropic bird, and fitter to abide

Harsh usage, or the bitter, nipping blast
Of cold neglect, the bane of spirits proud :
Like the wood robin, o'er the drifted snows
I'll sing unterrified ; and if of life
Heaven deems me worthy, Heaven will sure provide

Shelter and food, though on me all men frown.
But if my little lays have power to please—
To call a passing smile on sorrow's face,
Or, momentary, lull the rankling wounds
Which bleed in every bosom—or add new joy
To joy already full—or wake a note
Responsive to my own, though the song drowns
My feebler melody—I'll happy live
And happier die, though with me dies each tone
That gave me note on earth. Though Fame
comes not

To glad my heart—not for mere Fame itself,
But to extend my usefulness afar ;
For who will listen to the fameless Bard,

Or deem his lessons worth a passing thought,
Whose head is bare and wreathless? Yet go forth,
Go forth my harmless Book! like Noah's dove,
Mayhap, thou may'st bring back an olive branch
To deck thy master's unambitious head.

THE LESSON OF LIFE.

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THE LESSON OF LIFE.

AN aged man, leaning his tottering weight
Upon the shoulder of a fair haired youth,
Passed, with unsteady steps, along the path
Which threads the village church-yard, and upon
A tomb that rose conspicuous rested him ;
By thoughts enrapt which inspiration drew
From the unnumbered graves that circled him.
But the boy stood up, and gazed with open eye
On the declining sun ; while heaved his bosom
Like a troubled sea ; and, ever and anon,

Half uttered thoughts broke forth, emotions fierce,
Which shook his very frame ; and his grasped hand
Caught at the empty air, as if to snatch
A well tried falchion from its glittering sheath.

The old man, half astonished, on his son
Fixed his full gaze, and said, “ What see'st thou,
boy,
In the calm face of heaven, to call forth thoughts
So potent ? ”

But the stripling, all abashed,
His flushing features from his father turned ;
Then looked again where the red setting sun
Gleamed on a pile of heavy, purple clouds,
Which, all day battling with the mountain peaks,
Had dashed their dusky fronts in wild array,
'Gainst the bald summits ; now, as eve drew on,
Rested their weary squadrons half-way down
The opposing mountain, and sank to sleep
'Neath the triumphant light that lit its brow.

“Father,” said he, “though my eyes rested on
Yon bank of glorious clouds, I saw them not ;
For I was wrapt in thoughts that, in despite
Of sober reason, haunt me like a curse.
Yet now thou ask’st, methinks they shape them-
selves

Into the forms of silent, threatening hosts,
Amid them waving pennons and standards proud ;
And white walled tents and gay pavilions gleam,
Of cloth of gold, hung o’er with burnished arms
That flicker in the sun-light ; while around
Dark legions frown as resting from a fray :
Far on the outskirts beam flashes of light,
Which to me seem like groves of moving spears,
Guarding within their glittering round secure
Their war-worn comrades. Now a transient ray,
Darting across, seems like a full armed knight
Spurring among the dusky throngs, arrayed
In all the gorgeous panoply of war.”

“Enough, enough!” broke in the old man’s voice.

“Thus ever to the Future turns the eye
Of him who, standing on the shadowy verge
Of new-born life, would fain, from out the mist
That balks his anxious view, shape fancied forms
Congenial to his soul; people the earth
With things as false and fleeting as the shapes
Wrought by the sun on yonder pile of clouds.
But Age’s eye dwells ever on the Past;
Rolls back its philosophic gaze, and scans
The varied path its eager vision roved
From youth to feeble eld; and sees alas!
How every tinselled idol, that its youth
Had longed to grasp, faded beneath the touch
Of stern, unwavering Truth. Thus Youth and
Age
Dwell in far separated kingdoms. Youth
Gazes on phantoms, conjures from the brain
Shapes, pleasures, aims and longed-for happiness

Which have no real existence on this earth ;
And over all it spreads a potent spell
Whose alchymy turns, Midas like, each thing
To purest gold, gilding the meanest mark
With a delusive glitter. But the Old
Gaze on a world of stern realities ;
On acts whose trace is stamped with iron foot
On the external universe ; whose forms
Oft in the middle watches of the night,
And in the twilight's shade, sacred to thought
And thronged memory, have come, like ghosts,
Laying their icy fingers on the heart,
Till they half stilled its beatings. Then we know
How high to prize the aimless aims of Youth ;
When we have seen the hard won trophies sink,
'Fore our astonished eyes, to heaps of dust ;
And own, like desert travellers, that the land
Glittering with streams and valleys of repose,
The fair land of the Future—was a scene
Of our distempered vision ; or else shaped forth

By the sun's beams from some delusive mist,
Which melts as we approach it. Then we know
That as each coming day becomes the Present,
It with it brings dark hours of care, not gladness.
How vain the idle prophecies of Hope !
When but a single turn of that great wheel
O'er which our pilot Circumstance presides,
May urge the stalwart vessel of our life
From the direct, desired course, and dash
Her groaning bulk, high stranded, motionless,
The gnawing rocks among, a sight for Fate
To laugh at.

“Ah! thoughts like these comport not
With thy years, unapt for Age's wisdom.
But O this warning to thy memory take,
Avoid Ambition ! 'Tis a dangerous fiend,
Arrayed in angel's garments, whose soft voice
Tempts his fond follower to destruction's gulph.
At best, a tissue of base, selfish pride ;
A sun that shines not for the warmth it gives,

But that its brightness may be glorified.
 All to itself, but nothing aught to it.
 Thrust not thyself before thy fellow man,
 And vaunt to be a leader ; for the few
 Who thus have led a palsied world, at length,
 When power and gold, and all the wondrous
 charms

That in the vulgar eye upheld them, failed,
 Have fallen unaided by the petted herd
 Who basked beneath their smiles, unpitied by
 The timid slaves who 'neath their sceptres
 cowered.

Yet judge not harshly of mankind for this,
They It in the end gives justly ; but Fame's crown
 Can ill requite a life of cankering care ;
 Can ill requite the assassin's bloody stab ;
 Or a long eve of life, illy endured,
 On a bleak sea-washed island.

“ Ah ! how few

With mortal strength reach immortality.

O ! where is he who with his single arm
Rolled back the tide of battle ? while his brow
Flushed with the hope of immortality,
As proudly 'tween the opposing hosts he stood,
The mark of every weapon. Now, perchance,
In a dim nook of some cathedral vast,
His cumbrous trophied monuments arise,
Scrawled o'er with sounding phrase, couched in a
tongue

Unknown to half the world, unread by all.

Nay, Boy, rather in peaceful quiet rest,
In the world nameless, unless the voices
Of enslaved mankind call thee to succor
From the Tyrant's grasp, or baser bondage
Of blind Ignorance the feeble masses.

Thy work achieved, go, like the ancient Roman,
To thy plough ; but of recompense dream not !

“ How vain his life whose precious hours are spent
In deeds of selfish glory ! Oft the path

Mistaken, oft the mark o'ertravelled quite ;
So when the twilight hour of life draws on,
When the weak hand can scarcely lift the blade
Which swung a feather in the youthful grasp,
When the directing eye, the courage vast,
The bounding blood, the craft, the energy
That gave him power, fall withered, stricken down
Beneath the enervating touch of age—
How sad to hear ambition's votary whine!
'To see him stretch his feeble hands, and seek
To grasp the phantom o'er the yawning grave!

“ Yet, haply, some have died, buoyed by the hope
Of after honours, whose short living fame
Has perished ere their bodies. But known now
To some dry ponderer over antique lore,
Who, for a fleeting moment, raked aside
The dust of old oblivion, in a day
Again to close above them. Where are they,
The titled poets, the gay silken bards,

Whose warblings rapt the ear of Second Charles?
Who crossed their spotted fingers o'er the pall
Which decked their gilded, coroneted beds,
And slept, and dreamed of immortality.

O! Etherege, Dorset, Vanbrugh, Buckingham,
Licentious Rochester, weak Newcastle,
Sedley and soft-tongued Suckling, and the host
Whose songs want now an echo, could ye tread
The scenes of your endeavours, and there find
How small a noise your little glory makes,
Ye'd curse the bloated monarch whose soft touch
Deflowered your muse, and sent her wanton to
you ;

Changed all her lays, took her from wood and
stream

To sing unwonted, artificial songs,
'Neath silken hangings, to polluted crowds
Of painted strumpets! Thus 'twill ever fare
With those who pander to the present time ;
For the pure rill of song, whose onward course

Flows through the absorbing sands of Time, must
burst,

Like that which leapt beneath the prophet's rod,
From out a heaven fed rock, and flow along
In no accustomed channel.

“ Yet how few,
Whose deeds are worthy of immortal praise,
Gain their deserts! Some, for a season, wear
The olive wreath; but when the rolling years
Bring on a new Olympiad, from the brow
The withered leaflets fall, and a new wreath
Decks out a new competitor. Happy they—
Like the blind Chian, or the heaven rapt bard
Who sung of Eden, or the trumpet voiced
Who made sweet Avon murmur to his lay,
And flow immortal 'tween its rocky sides—
Whose glories heap the rolling car of Time
With each succeeding year. Thence challenge not
Eternal justice, because God has raised
So far above our humbler heads these few.

The gift is to mankind, not to the men
Who bear such precious favours ; for when death
Nips the rich blossoms of their glorious lives,
The perfume and the healing balm remain
To comfort coming ages.

“ Though to all
Heaven’s wisdom grants not greatness, laud I not
Inaction ; that dull slothfulness which numbs
Our finer natures, and draws on our heads
A curse worse than Circean ; makes the heart,
And the profound mysterious abyss
Where lurks the awful soul, a shapeless chaos ;
A stagnant, filthy, heavy pool, engendering
Corruption ; striking at a single blow
The mortal and immortal. O ! if sight
Known to our earthly vision every day—
Of Heaven bound pilgrims who throw down the
staff,
And sit in idiot wonder by the road,
Seeking to cull the luring flowers which grow

Along the pathway—planted to delight,
Not form the total business of their lives—
While the sun that measures forth their journey
Whirls across the heavens, cleaving the ether
Towards his red western seat ; when starless night
Comes stealing from its dimmest eastern verge,
Wrapping the frightened traveller in its shroud—
A night in which each darling of his heart
Shows like a horrid spectre—how gropes he,
How stretches forth his feeble, helpless hands,
And seeks the road, now vanished ! What loud
cries

Fill the damp, empty air, as onward stumbling,
He bewails the ill-spent hours of sun-light !
If sight like this, I say, e'er comes within
The ken of those bright ministers of man,
Who wandering from their starry watch-fires gaze,
With saddened faces, on this nether world,
How must they stretch their helping fingers forth,
E'en to the bar Omnipotence has placed

'Tween men and angels, as 'tween life and death,
And seek to urge the idle loiterers on !

What hasty blows reverberating beat
On echoing Conscience, that alarum of souls !
One may be saved in thousands, and for that
A strain of hallelujahs and soft sounds

Thine Rise upward from the extremest edge of Heaven,
From all the outposts of the Angel band,
E'en to the throne Eternal ; brings a smile
O'er that pale thorn crowned face which, for a
time,

Gains a brief respite for this Sodom vast.
O ! were it not for the bright band of Saints
Who, day by day, with tears and humble prayers
Keep off the Eternal's wrath and justice ;
Who meekly bear ungrateful scoff and jeer,
As bore their master ; who can truly tell
How many rounds the circling years would run,
Ere from the firmament this twinkling star
Would vanish like a taper !

“ Who shall say

Who in the purer eye of Heaven is great?
 Is he, who with his banded steel clad hordes
 O’erturns whole empires? Is he, whose riches
 O’er a starving land spread health and plenty ;
 Until each beggar, big with fat and praise,
 Hiccoughs his glory? Or, whose ringing lyre
 Winds round the hearts of listening spell bound
 men

The mystic chains of living harmony?
 Is he, who, propped with hate and stubborn pride,
 Falls martyr to some monstrous, soul-hugged error?
 Or he, who ’gainst adversity, ’gainst scorn,
 With tearful eyes forgiving all who hate,
 Eyes in whose briny depths shine Faith’s pure
 pearl,

Treads a rough way, with upturned visage meek,
 Nor recks what path his awful Pilot leads?
 Who shall decide? But this we know full well,
 What men call life so small, so poor a part

Of real Existence is, 'tis scarce worth counting.
Measure this life by what must measure Man,
Eternity, dread word—in what a sea
The petty atom falls! Ay stretch the brain
Until the mental eye strains nigh to bursting!
How sick and faint the drooping thoughts come
back!

Nor with them bring the most remote and dim
Memento or idea of that vast flood,
That limitless, that landless, shoreless sea,
In which frail Man, the intellectual ark,
Floats onward, ever, ever. Years to years
Add, till the mathematic hand grows tired,
And give them all to earth;—and what are these
To infinite eternity? Say thou,
Whose soul is parched with thirst for earthly fame,
What is life's greatness, life with all its pomp,
With all the grandeur that e'er marked the scene,
Compared with e'en the lowest, meanest fate
Eternity holds darkly?

“ But I’ve strayed
Far from my path ; haply my wanderings led
A step towards Heaven. Know that unceasing
Action,
Zeal and Fortitude, led on by Justice,
Reason and unwavering Truth, can never
To mankind work evil. Though they should hurl
From off their venerable thrones great tyrants ;
Uproot the time-bred errors men have built,
Like Titans, and shake the crumbling ruins
On their heads who have so long upheld them ;
Setting the world to groping for a way
To govern safe its huge, unwieldy masses.
This earth so crowded is with bloated Wrongs,
Grown grey and peevish, their claims resting on
Remote antiquity and usage long,
That Truths can scarce find place to tread upon.
If thy heart tells thee thou art strong and pure,
And a low voice, which none but great men hear,
Whispers within the portals of thy soul—

"Go forth and help thy weakly battling race!"
 Join in life's struggle therefore; but towards fame
 Look not; for a divided purpose oft
 Misses both fame and action. Give the act,
 And not the selfish glory, thy full strength;
 So may'st thou better do the deed. Should Fame
 O'ertake thee, as she often comes to men
 Whose thoughts are furthest from her, meekly bear
 The honours she brings with her. Be not puffed
 With vanity above thy just deserts,
 And 'void the contest to live on thy name;
 But fight, fight while one foe remains,
 And die to live hereafter!

"Some there are
 Whose strength suits not to bide the onset fierce
 Of that athleta whose gaunt brawny form,
 In nakedness olympic, smeared with oils,
 Stands forth to brave the tug of the whole world,
 Secure in conscious power, whom men call Error;
 Lest his subtle skill in mockery eludes

The half ta'en grasp he jeering, suffers ; or,
With the effrontery of hardy strength,
Lifts in mid air his adversary's form,
And hurls him earthward lifeless. They with pen,
Or more persuasive eloquence that dwells
In solemn numbers of the warbling lyre,
May shape the rugged thoughts and acts of men
To forms of living beauty ; mould the mass
So its harmonious splendour shall outshine
God's dumb and soulless works. Thus ordered *He*
That man in mass, and individually should work
His own progression. While the light of Truth
Shines ever brightening into glorious day,
And Knowledge, maiden meek, steals on and
peers,
With curious wonder, into spots before
To her unknown—who shall set limits to,
Who measure forth progression infinite,
Which age by age, goes on in Creatures formed
At first but less than Angels ?

“These not thoughts
Which haunt the Poet only. O ! if men
Would turn from these dear books whose columns
long

Attest their hoarded treasures, for an hour—
A little hour well won from years of gain—
To ponder if this beauteous frame of ours,
With all its subtle senses, and that mind
Whose wonderous faculties perceptive grasp
A grain of Truth from out a sea of Error,
Were given to cast accounts, or overreach,
With cunningest device and well laid scheme,
Their fellow schemer ? Or if wealth, at last,
Pours to your coffers in a solid stream,
Will you sit down in idle ease, and feed
The hundred mouths which sense perverted holds
Forever gaping ? Has man no fear then ?
Knows he not he hangs, in nicest balance,
Wavering 'tween Life and Death ; that but a mote
May turn the hesitating beam forever ?

Then comes the awful doom—bide it who can—
“Weighed, and found wanting!” Ah it gives
a pang

That sets my brain to whirling; brings a fear
That makes my very marrow crawl, as if
Instinct with frozen life—such fear as one
With sharpened senses feels, when from the maze
Of some dread dream the sleeper wakes a coward—

Thus to see man’s divinity forgot,
Though, big with pride, he boasts the priceless
treasure.

Yes, in a world where every atom speaks
Of changes momentary—where each shade
Of hill or tree, that glides along the ground,
Tells, like a dial, of the steady march
Unwearied Time pursues, man heaps up gold,
Frosts o’er the crisped locks of youth with grey,
Digs furrows on the brow, and in the heart
Sinks, prematurely, wrinkles; and calls this,

This sad perversion of his nature, Wisdom.
Could all the tongues whose winning words have
 striven

Mankind to lead back to the paths of Truth ;
Could all the lyres whose golden chords were
 strung

To lure with pleasant notes of sweet accord,
And mournful cadence, and indignant wrath,
And biting satire, and cold, trenchant truth,
Have turned to discord, wild as hell affords,
Suited to drive the erring Sinner mad ;
Their devilish art could not have more prevailed,
No surer, broader, steeper road have made,
Sheer downward to perdition, than has Man,
Left to his own unbridled Will, shaped out,
E'en from those glorious powers, those wrecks
 of thought—

The last sad remnants of a purer state—
Now turned awry—which Heaven in mercy gave
To save, not damn him. Yet not in hatred

Turn, like a sickened misanthrope, aside
 And leave him to his errors. He who feels
 Within himself the strength and quickening power
 Which Nature gives to Genius, owes to man—
 By Heaven-wrought chains of Duty bound—
 great deeds.

Deeds which may tear his heart asunder; hold
 him

Bare to the hissing fools whose good he sought ;
 Draw on his head the laugh of the light crew,
 Who deem they follow an abuséd creed—
 Even by themselves misconstrued—which erst
 made

The full thronged Attic gardens eloquent—
 Pursuit of Pleasure, not by virtue won,
 And goodly deeds, as Epicurus taught ;
 But by pursuit of Pleasure sensual,
 Which o'er its victim, like a vampire, broods,
 And sucks his blood whose cheek it softly fans.

“ The Genius, lifted far o’er common men,
Looks ’round in vain for sympathy that fills
Insatiably His bosom’s appetite ;
And finds to Him His fellow man appears
As some poor creature of another race—
His common wisdom utter ignorance—
His finest feelings gross as selfishness—
His loftiest aims no higher than the scope
Of his dim vision—his sapient judgment
Fond fatuity—that all his thoughts, aims,
Words and acts direct to naught and emptiness—
He feels upon a lofty hill He treads,
High up and lifted ’bove the vulgar throng,
Breathing a rarer, finer, purer air
Than they whose lives in humble vales are passed ;
That scenes, to them unknown, dwell ’neath His
eyes ;
That first He sees the morning sun come forth,
Unclouded views its middle course, and last—
When darkness wraps the nether world—its set-
ting ;

But lone, lone as that mateless Arab bird
Which burns and dies 'mid spices! Man's small
joys

Fill not a corner of His mighty heart.

Man's aims are feathers in His powerful grasp ;

His own are bounded by infinity ;

God's arm the only bar to His aspirings :

As 'mong the Angel throng, though clothed in
flesh,

He stands upright, an equal. But from earth

Though He may gain the common sympathy

Which man holds out to man, within his breast

Are passions, thoughts and hopes unknown, un-
dreamed

By ordinary mortals. Feelings which burst

Across the mind like whirlwinds, seize the soul,

And almost shake the intellectual man

To chaos—Ideas vague and dimly seen,

Which stand well nigh beyond the bourne of
thought,

Towards which the aching brain struggles in vain.
Or looks on heights where Angels never pry,
Or into depths that devils shudder at ;
Or grasps the Universe in one grand scheme ;
Or on God's glory, with unshrinking eye,
Gazes and ponders. Or, admiring, scans
Our every day occurrences and sights,
Which on His mind burst with new power and
meaning ;

Those daily Miracles which use alone
Makes valueless and common. Earth to Him
Seems as at first to Adam, wonder lost,
Appeared creation. Or takes Fancy's wings,
And flies beyond the utmost bound of Sense,
To that Arcadia where the Poet dwells
In lands of loveliness, more gorgeous far
Than those which grew beneath the pencil touch
Of dreaming Claude. Then sick and saddened
turns,

That feeble language can so ill convey,

Can only hide and veil the burning thoughts,
 Which through it shine with half their splendor lost.
 What wonder, if debarred all sympathy,
 The life of Genius brings not happiness!
 What wonder, if the mighty fire within
 So soon consumes its feeble dwelling place!
 Or frozen by despair and chill neglect,
 The liquid fire, that nourishes his life,
 Bursts the frail vase which holds it!

“ Yet such man,
 Of light transcendent, illy acts who lends
 His fellow man no ray of his pure brightness.
 E’en though with sneers the ingrate takes the gift,
 Despair not; and this hint from Nature take—
 Earth’s smallest seedling by the wayside dropped
 May, days hereafter, when the genial times
 Of fruitfulness come on, flourish and bear;
 Though for a season ripening ’neath the mould
 That nourished, not destroyed it; when full
 grown,

Another race may seek its fruitful shade,
And glorify the Sower.

“The day must come
When Truth, now nursing in the arms of Time,
Shall burst its bondage, and come boldly forth,
As came Achilles to the walls of Troy,
In arms invulnerable, to sweep away
The host of veteran Errors, which so long
Have held the citadels of Thought in awe
By force of linked customs. Therefore ye
Who hear the solemn hum and trampling feet
Of thronging numbers crowding through the
brain,
Whose hearts are rent as with an inward fire,
That racks the sense with joyous pain, burst forth!
Pour your wild music on the listening air!
Rise like the lark to Heaven ! to earth but bound
By one small thread of finest melody.
Yet still remember in your highest flights,
Though clouds of splendor veil the distant world,

That 'mid its fields your homely nest is placed,
And on its bosom, when the eve draws on,
A spot is found to rest your daring wings,
With strengthening food, a home secure from
harm :

For so the eagle rests his weary wing,
Nor can he soar forever. And thus man,
Like great Antæus, gains his chiefest strength
From his life-giving mother, gentle earth.

“But woe to you who love the gilded cage,
Who pander basely to the present hour,
Who build not on that firm foundation, Truth !
Your artificial lays shall scarce outlive
The fleeting falsehoods that once gave them birth.
O that some mark of infamy, like Cain's,
Might fix eternal impress on their brows,
And send them shunned and naked through the
world,
The jest of fools, and sorrow of the wise !

Who seek, with untaught power of mighty verse,
To lure their weaker brothers far astray ;
Or praise their blinded errings. Each one knows,
Within his heart, himself a hypocrite ;
Sees the sad tears the ravished muses shed
O'er their undoing ; hears a potent voice
Thunder within his hollow soul—" Thou 'Traitor !
Unto whom much is given, much is required."
How back in horror draws the shuddering mind
When pondering the fate of erring genius !
What doom for it ? What nether deeps of hell,
Beyond the ken of foulest fiends, its home ?
When disembodied conscience, robbed of sense
And all the earthly guile that blunts remorse,
Sees pitiless the stern, frozen eye of Truth
Glare through the blackest night, centered on
The trembling soul's misdeeds ? What can con-
sole—
What earthly balm allay the torture ? Fame ?
No ! for what one in pride of power sets up,

And risks immortal name and honour on,
A thousand envious hands to overturn
Unceasing toil. Naught that is false can stand.
True greatness builds upon the roots of things,
Builds on the fundamental, homely truths
Of human Reason. Lifts its proud form aloft
Like the sand-girded pyramid ; and rests
Upon foundations whose tremendous size
Make the huge superstructure, howe'er vast,
Howe'er adorned with architectural strength,
Seem light and airy. There grey, wondering Time,
Wrapt up in admiration of a thing
Which measures his duration, turns aside
His noiseless chariot's destructive wheels,
O'ercome with awe and reverence. Have not they,
Whose voices peal among the echoing years,
Founded their songs, however grand, upon
Those simple, natural Truths which, touched,
 come home
To every bosom? Things which were the same

Ten hundred years ago as now ; whose source
Is in man's nature ; the same to me as
To the dwarfish, frozen Esquimaux who roams
Beneath the chilly Arctic ; which would rouse
With the same fire and energy the hearts
Once beating 'neath the spice-balmed Thebans'
 breasts,

And the vast crowd which full of life rolls on
Beneath my window. Sing of these, ye Bards !
Ye earthly seraphs ! Prophets of these days !
The lowest of you far as Heaven from Earth
Above the common, powerless herd of men—
Not that contemptuous I would seek to sink
My fellow mortal 'neath the Heaven rapt Bard ;
Nay ! rather raise him to the glowing sphere
Whence draws the Poet his inspiring might—
Sing of all Truth ! and if no fame is given,
Yet feel, like nature, you have shed your gifts
Of flowers and fruits, to deck our mother earth,
On a far distant, undiscovered land,

Where no one gathers of the bounteous store.
Haply, when seas of doubt and fear perplex
Some storm tossed voyager, far away he'll see
The smiling, fruitful land, where harboured safe,
He'll grateful spread the country's rich renown."

"See," said the youth impatient, "Father see
What pyramids of flame the sun declining
Shoots aloft, e'en to the zenith! And now,
What showers of red and purple light the clouds
Shake from their golden skirts upon the heads
Of yonder towering hills! which seem to lift
Their glowing crests in regal pomp aloft,
Swelling beneath their fiery diadems."

"Thus gleams each object to the eyes of youth,"
Broke in the sage, "thus takes each thing he sees
To be no other than it seems. To me,
Yon bank of clouds, and the red setting sun,
Tell of a broken storm whose rain has beat,

In pattering volleys, on some naked head ;
Ere long, again to form and beat on others ;
Or of a long and sweltering day dragged out
In toil beneath the torrid sun, which hot
Shot down direct and penetrating beams
On all who wandered 'neath it. Such a day
Was this, and such a one may be the morrow.

“ The Wise, my Son, trust never to mere shows.
But ah ! how slow is Youth those truths to learn,
To older men, by stern Experience taught.
O ! that but few might suffer for the mass !
Yet none believe, while sailing down life's stream,
That all the ghastly hulks which line the shores,
Were wrecked on some deep sunken shoal which
lies

Hid 'neath the smiling current. None believe
That things so fair, in outward seeming, bear
Within the seeds of death. Each must essay,
Each tempt the peril, spite of warning given.

What Man—howe'er endowed with Reason's
power—

By mere unaided force of mind, could tell
What the effect, if to a sulphurous mass
Of black and sluggish powder be applied
The smallest point of fire, till in the air
With clamorous and deafening shock, bursts forth
The sleeping thunder? In the moral World
Are magazines of ill as fully stored,
As dread, as instant in their dire effects,
As full of peril to incautious Youth;
Which, touched, leave but a shattered wreck
behind.

Yet with these slumbering dangers venturous man
Will toy and dally, like a wanton girl;
Lift the frail fabric of his pleasures on
The very mine which, in a moment, may
Hurl him and his bright hopes aloft in air,
A blackened, shapeless ruin.

“Experience,

Thou sad and hard won monitor, who stand'st,
When unavailing are thy threatening looks,
Close by the side of Age! can'st thou not teach,
By some direct and shorter course, the lore
Thou whisper'st to inert and feeble men,
Who need no caution; whose next tottering step
Closes forever their long run career,
In that mysterious womb of Heaven, the grave?
Can'st thou not teach by potent dream or vision,
Or by intuitive perception, or,
Making Age eloquent, by lessons grave
Which time worn men may tell to listening
Youths?

Who may, so guided, early learn to shun
The crowded dangers that beset their path:
So, like Ulysses, with their hearing stopped
By thy sage counsels, they may safely glide,
Intact and harmless, past the Syren sounds

Which every pleasure sings to lure astray.
Not that I'd plant the callous heart of Age
In youthful breasts—No! but when man comes
forth,

To fight the fight of Life, he cannot have
Too much of wisdom. What could not be done
By youthful Vigor to Experience linked;
By the same Courage which, when misdirect,
Hurries it, heedless, into danger's throat!

“ Yet man ne'er learned, nor ever will I fear,
By other than his own experience sad.
I remember well that once your Grandsire,
On an eve like this, if I mistake not,
On this very spot, with thoughtful discourse
Warned me—filled like you, with gleaming
visions,

And the checkered aims, all unconnected,
Which belong to Youth—of pending dangers
Round me; of guileful snares set from without,

And still more guileful thoughts invading me.
And bade me watch, but most to watch myself.
Yet one by one within the snares I fell ;
And one by one the guilty thoughts o'ercame me.
Till starless in the sea of Life, without
Compass or chart, my destined course forgot,
Scarce one of all my darling hopes attained,
At last myself I found, weary and worn,
Battered and useless, and but asking rest,
Cast on an unknown shore, the coast of Death.

“ Various as are the motives which men urge
To actions high, or deeds of low deceit,
Or pleasures, which the idle idly seek ;
There is but one, in all the varied round,
Worthy his dauntless courage and his skill ;
Or manly pleasure fitted to afford,
That fills the intellectual nature up
With ever changing pastimes of delight ;
Pursuit of Truth, I mean, tempered by Love

To God and Man. This is a chase which, kept,
Shows the game ever in the Hunter's view,
While he, with brightened eye and flushing cheek,
And veins dilated with the blood of health,
Follows his nimble prey. The game ne'er gained
Till at the close of life, beside a bed
Placid and balmy as this summer's eve,
Some pious hand with kindly reverence lifts
The toil-bought trophies of the glorious chase ;
But grasped in death ; yet surely borne away
To do him honour in another land.
This the aim which spite of peril or neglect,
Or Hatred, swelling with its envious birth,
Or Fear, that shakes her aery dagger high,
Or wanton Pleasure, rich in naked charms
And luring baits to tempt the gloating eye,
The Youth, adventurous, bears safe through Life's
 strife,
In arms celestial clad, whose front of Truth
Drives Envy back innoxious. Or with blade

Of heavenly temper, like thunder-bolt,
Cleaves irresistibly the coward rout
Who shun to meet the terror-bearing steel.
E'en brazen Falsehood slinks away aghast,
And dreads to brave the lofty, beaming crest ;
Slinks from the world, trembling in caverns dark,
Or hid in nooks obscene where light ne'er comes ;
There sobbing cowers her votaries among ;
And seeks to shift her guilty robe and badge
From off her shoulders, to impose it on
Some ductile victim ; for the wary shun,
With soft apology and glozing words,
The certain death which 'neath that garment
 lurks.

“ Fitly did they, who knighthood laid upon
The budding flowers and glory of their land,
Prescribe long days of purity and fast,
With thoughts removed from earthly care and
 guilt,

Arrayed in spotless robes ; and last, alone,
With God to watch the slow-paced midnight
through.

Such, only such can bear the blazon bright
Which Truth inscribes upon her Champion's
shield ;

For evil means would damn the fairest deed
That Saint or Angel, ever pure, performed :
And no man yet with honest ends in view,
Which he in face of God dare say are pure,
By crooked ways wrought out the purposed good ;
For he in the achievement does more ill,
Than good achieved can balance, or blot out.

One drop of poison mars the sweetest draught ;
One wrong, to meanest mortal done, will smirch
Intent as pure as morn's white, spotless front.

While all the twisted paths to Fame and Power,
Which timid man, ingenious, slyly winds
Round obstacles by coward Fancy shaped,
Might reach their ends by the more easy course

Which bold, straight forward Honesty pursues.
It needs but Courage and unshaken will,
And Energy which never flags or fails,
With frank and open heart, above all guile,
To gain respect from men, and win whate'er
High Heaven allows to weaker man below.

“ The sun has set ; and now the weeping earth,
In sable garments, mourns her buried lord ;
Yet nature's grief a consolation gains ;
For see, the mild faced moon is stealing on,
Threading her way among the bright browed
stars ;

And, as her silver finger touches earth,
She seems the memory of departed day.
'Tis thus to me a moonlit night e'er seems,
A faint idea, a dim remembrance vague
Of day's departed splendor. Like the thoughts
Which rise unbidden in the grateful heart,
And ope the gates of meditative tears,

When memories of departed friends rise up,
Whose kindly radiance for a season lit
The else dark world that in the bosom rolls.
But earth shall see another morn ! Shall I
Be deemed presumptuous, if I hence infer
Another morn may greet the human soul ;
Another joy be given to heavenly joys,
When spirits pure strain in their close embrace
The friends whose presence robbed this world of
 woe ?

Else where the harmony in Heaven, unless
All Spirits blend to form an equal whole,
Knit and conjoined by bands of purest love ?—
For e'en on earth love, pure above compare,
Makes us akin to Angels. Then shall not
Those spirits mingle closest which on earth
Found out and joined the heavenly harmony ?
Or must we deem our earthly natures changed,
E'en in their better parts—that holy Love,

Those sweet Affections, which smooth roughest
 hearts,

Those high Aspirings after Truth and Good,
Those very acts which win a seat in Heaven,
In Heaven no longer please the changeless God ;
That man a pure Intelligence becomes,
Of feeling void, a glorious, blazing sun
That lights, but warms not ? Then must change
 entire

Pass o'er our being, first created in
The likeness of our Maker ; man become,
E'en in that loftier state, less like his God,
And therefore fallen. For none believe, I ween,
That the eternal likeness can exist
In aught than moral semblance. None believe
That God is aught than space-pervading Power,
Incorporeal, devoid of earthly form,
Composed of mental qualities which dwell—
Though in a dimmed, less powerful state—in
 man ;

Of Justice, Mercy, Constancy and Truth,
With all pervading Sympathy and Love
For each thing, mortal or immortal, living ;
Joined to deific, perfect Power ; towards which
Man with creative Genius ever strives.
Here ends the semblance vague ; above rise
heights

To which Archangels never hope to climb—
Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence,
Powers God reserves but for Himself alone.
Nor need is that the disembodied Soul
In sentient tissues should enwrap itself,
To own those quick Perceptions which, on earth,
Urge and direct the body's feeble mould.
These Qualities belong, by right supreme,
To Godlike Spirit, in its essence dwell,
And with its flight depart the grosser clay,
Leaving no relique in the body's grasp—
The flesh shrinks not at pain ; and the dimmed
eye

Weeps not with pity, or averts its gaze
From the sun's fiercest glare ; the ear hears not,
Nor starts the warrior at the trumpet's call ;
The balmy air shakes down the gifts of flowers,
The perfume passes by as o'er a waste,
Nor stirs the fixed and rigid face with smiles.
O whither, where are gone those Faculties
Which made proud man the wonder of the world,
The wonder chief, where all is marvellous ?
Died they with yon base clod ? How shrinks the
mind

At the bare thought ! No ! high in Heaven, among
The greeting Cherubim, with worship filled,
With gratitude, and love, and virtue human,
Man stands confessed, though clad in Spirits' fire,
Undimmed by earth, untainted by gross sense,
In all his pristine majesty, man still :
Though Angel, differing far in quality
From those primeval ministers who rose
Ere man's creation—equal, yet distinct.

“ These call not Poet’s fancies, idly woke
While musing o’er a sunset—Know we not,
Earth, formed for man, upon its bosom bears
The characters of God, the symbols, types
Of our existence; which to Wisdom’s eye
Are not sealed books! Each flower and budding

tree

Stands forth a Prophet, mute, but never changing;
And mighty seas and torrents I have heard
Shout Revelations irresistible;

That, like a miracle, conviction forced,
And left the doubting mind no hiding-place.

Ever to me the mountain nurtured brooks,
And the blue hills, and spreading woodlands wide,
The coursing clouds, each sound that Nature
makes,

Ay! and the little flowers, and trembling grass
Which ’neath my footsteps writhes, a spirit
breathe

That lights or melts my heart with smiles and tears

Alternate. Not to all is such converse ;
And Heaven I thank thee for the kindly boon !
For rather would I suffer misery's sting,
And feel I suffer, than not feel at all.

“ Now night is on ; and yon pale satellite
Weary with watching, sick at what she sees,
Care-worn with lighting in its orbit proud
This evil world, that o'er her reigns supreme,
Hides in the evening mist her pallid head,
And 'neath the clouds glides on her western way.
The eve wears fast ; we must depart my Son.
But when, years hence, your life is well nigh run,
And all your aims are either gained or lost,
When shadows lengthen on your evening path,
And life's dim star is almost set in death ;
If to this spot you come, on eve like this,
To cast about where you may lay your bones,
And, haply, on my grass-grown tomb you light,
Think of what here I taught thee. Then confess—

Though now, perchance, you heed it not at all,
And hug your darlings closer to your breast ;
Nurslings that will destroy you, grown to strength,
Like Pelias' daughters, though with good intent—
That all the dry but truthful words I said
Were founded on experience and deep thought ;
Though on your mounting hopes they fell like
frost

On heads of young and freshly budding flowers.
Confess that you have gathered by the way,
With painful shocks which almost set you mad,
The self-same lesson. That the aims of man,
Though seeming grand, are tainted with the sin
By which fell Adam : so, by sin, have strayed
Far from the paths of Rectitude and Truth.
That the Ambition which makes self its end,
As great a sin towards mortal man becomes,
As the design by which proud Satan fell,
And, therefore, worthy kindred punishment.
That Fame's loud clarion is an empty noise,

A moment ringing, then silent fore'er.
That love to God and man, pursuit of Truth,
Which tends to lift our moral being up,
Joined to those kindly sympathies, which spread
Content and peace around us, are the bounds
Should fence man's highest, boldest efforts in."

The old man ceased, as the low, wooden gate
Swung on their parting footsteps. And the Boy
Went forth, and fought, and died ere manhood's
prime :

The Old man buried him, with sighs and tears,
With many a grievous shaking of the head ;—
And 'neath this stone he lies, unknown and
nameless.

MISCELLANEOUS.



THE SONG OF THE WIND.

LIST the Lay Æolus sung me,
From his ever changing lyre,
As 'neath shadowing trees I flung me,
O'er me swung the sounding wire.

First a prelude sweet

Soft his fingers beat—

Tones which come, and then retreat ;
Tones might guide the Faries' dance,
When Queen Mab and court advance
Surly Oberon to greet.

Then loud the flashing chords he rung,
And thus the Storm God proudly sung :

“I am he whose lonely dwelling
Is within the caverned sky,
There a shepherd, cloud compelling,
Forth my fleecy flocks drive I.

Though a crownless king,
Loud my glories ring
Over earth and startled ocean,
When I rush with headlong motion.

“O’er fields that teem with the waving grain,
Smiling, the Peasant points his Wife,
Counting the sum of the harvest gain,
While fancy shapes their future life—
‘No longer we’ll bend ’neath aching toil,
No longer till the stubborn land ;
But crown our lot with the bounteous spoil
That gilds the fields on every hand.’

Then sadly the Housewife points her hand
Where the red harvest moon uprose,
Begirt with a dim and watery band,
While in her path dark storm clouds close,
That chase her on to her zenith's height,
Dogging her steps in dusky pack,
There hide from the earth her sober light,
And blot her noon with misty rack.

That night I come in my stormy powers,
The rich fields bow beneath the shock,
I scatter the corn like withered flowers,
In terror fly the timid flock.

Against me struggles the steadfast doors,
Fencing their garnered wealth of grain,
I burst them, scattering the hoarded stores
Prey to the ruthless hurricane.

I lift in my might the roof aloft,
Tearing the Homestead's ancient beams—
Those very rafters on which so oft
Rested his eyes in waking dreams,

Till every cranny and knot he knew
Upon their smoke-browned faces dim,
And deemed that in any storm that blew
Those beams of might would shelter him—
That roof, which in childhood seemed so high
He doubted 'twas the work of art,
But grew more lowly as days went by—
Strikes terror through his frozen heart.
Morn comes, and the Homeless stands alone,
Gazing on cheerless, wasted land ;
No ! not alone, for with ceaseless moan,
His dog licks his unconscious hand.
Where, where are the dreams of yester-even ?
Where is that dimpled, laughing child,
That fondly he called his load star, given
To cheer life's nights with radiance mild ?
And where, O where is the blue-eyed One,
Who shared his dream of wealthy bliss,
Who shared his toil, and, at set of sun,
Made home twice home with welcome kiss ?

‘ Ah! the sun may set, the sun may rise,
His beams gild nothing now for me ;
For all things are dark before my eyes—
The past hangs on my memory.’

“ Haste we from the mourner weeping,
To the placid, rolling sea,
Murmuring like a giant sleeping,
When in dreams unvexed by me.

Soft the rose-lipped shells
Sing, like faint toned bells,
Round their mighty Parent’s pillow,
Choral songs to lull his billow.

“ See, slowly from her moorings starting,
Moves, sea-ward bound, a stately ship ;
Tears, and the latest words of parting,
Fall from reluctant eye and lip ;
While the harsh grating chain’s ascending,
Urged by the sailors’ massy beams,

And the huge spreading yards are bending,
With rattling blocks and iron's screams.
Then outward towards her native ocean,
Like some vast sea-bird flying home,
She dashes on, with headlong motion,
Cleaving the rushing billow's foam.
While 'mong the vocal ropes I'm glancing,
And rustling in the swelling sail,
The Sailor's heart, with pleasure dancing,
Scorns whisperings of the coming gale.
Far from the watery east I'm driving
Huge, blackening clouds of ruthless rain,
With bickering lightning 'mong them striving;
No zephyr now, a hurricane.
Sea-ward my dusky squadrons turning,
I tear the tops from crested waves,
And their white masses, 'neath my spurning,
Fly like a rout of pallid slaves.
Down on the death-doomed vessel dashing,
The masts snap like a rotten branch,

While through the storm-tossed waters flashing,
The ship bursts like an avalanche.
Half smothered by the raging ocean,
The Captain braves the rushing tide,
But o'er his brow in constant motion,
Like wreathed snakes, the furrows glide.
All skill is vain ; for see appearing
Black, jagged rocks beneath the lee,
Their savage heads in scorn uprearing,
Round which hoarse breakers laugh in glee.
Now hardened man his clenched hand offers,
And raves to Heaven a fruitless prayer,
Shrines, vows and wealth uncounted proffers,
Then sinks in frozen, mute despair.
The Mother high her child extending,
By a half frantic faith subdued,
Upbraids the billows for not bending,
As 'fore the Host a multitude.
And there the Maiden, meekly bending,
Breathes prayers her mother taught her Child ;

Pure thoughts, like gentle doves ascending,
Then o'er the maddened billows smiled.
A crash ! the steadfast ship is sundering ;
One cry of human agony,
And the wild elements are thundering
Over a lone and shipless sea.

“ Towards the land my wings I'm pluming,
Where the desert wide expands,
With unfrequent verdure blooming,
Island like, among the sands.

 Type of destiny
 Spreads the sandy sea :
Unlimited the wastes are seen,
The green spots glimmering far between.

“ Towards the night's dim strand extending,
Surges slow the tide of day,
Where yon bright-browed hills are fending
From the earth morn's glittering spray ;

Till the golden breakers dashing
O'er the light o'erbrimming shores,
On the plain, in splendor flashing,
One vast inundation pours.
Morn o'er that dull plain is shedding
Savage beauties not its own,
As her golden feet are treading
Lightly on from stone to stone.
Sounds of life are faintly breaking
O'er the sullen desert sands,
As the Caravan, awaking,
Slowly forms its varied bands :
Like a torpid snake unbending
'Neath the warming vernal ray,
And his ^glengthening form extending,
Glides along his sluggish way.
Foremost, filled with home's soft yèarning,
Yeman's wealthy Trader bore,
While his mind is idly turning
Memory's changing circle o'er.

Mounted on a steed that never
Scourge or goading rowell knew,
Bounding, light as leopard, ever
At his rider's wild haloo ;
Tala's taintless blood extended
To those mighty steeds of yore,
With no baser current blended,
Which the Genii's monarch bore.*
'Long'st thou,' said the Trader, 'Tala,
For green Yeman's fruitful land ;
Where e'er rests the smile of Alla,
Where e'er falls his bounteous hand ?
Think'st thou of the sloping valley
Where the chaunting streamlets bound,
And the long, leaf covered alley
Softly shades the springing ground ;
Where the thieving winds, that rally
To pluck the flower's perfume rare,

* Solomon whom the Arabs believe to have been supreme ruler of the Genii.

On the bosom of that valley
 Sink beneath the load they bear?
 Ah ! without my Arab maiden,
 Field, and rill, and shading tree,
 Flower, and breezes perfume laden,
 Would lose half their charms for me.
 Fairer than she, famed in story,
 Who the boy of Canaan won*—
 Desert palm ! thy leafy glory
 Shades me from life's burning sun.
 Where yon swelling hills are blended
 With the many tinted skies,
 Where the sun in pomp ascended,
 Yeman's fruitful valley lies.

* Potiphar's Wife, Zuleikha. The loves of Joseph (called by Haufez, "The Moon of Canaan,") and Zuleikha form the subject of some of the most beautiful poems in the Arabic language. They are there represented as types of all constant lovers. The Arabic version of the story differs entirely from the original Mosaic narrative ; making Joseph anything but "*The Joseph*," we are proverbially taught to believe him.

One short hour, and pining sadness
Shall forever leave my side—
Care shall don a mask of gladness
When I clasp my Arab bride.’
Ha! the faithful camels utter
Low, instinctive moans of dread,
And the reeking steed’s sides flutter,
As he, snorting, lifts his head ;
Fear the stoutest bosom seizes,
Stifling heat o’erwhelms the air,
Die the faintest cooling breezes,
Heaven sheds forth a copper glare.
Faintly the sick sun is beaming
Light which scarce a shadow throws,
Like a dim, eclipsed moon seeming,
And his size portentous grows.
Hark! a wild, ear-startling moaning
Fills the heavy, stagnant air,
As if Nature’s self were groaning
O’er a deed she’d fain not dare.

Then afar the sandy ocean
Moves before the fearful storm ;
Columns vast, with spiral motion,
Into mighty armies form,
With their lofty plumes ascending
'Mid the stooping, murky clouds,
As their gloomy front extending,
Glimmering daylight sadly shrouds.
Now the banded ruin dashes,
Shouting 'mid the darkness dread,
O'er the trembling plain which crashes
'Neath the storm God's awful tread.
Gathering terrors as it courses ;
For the startled, heaving sands
Shake their manes, like desert horses
Bounding 'fore pursuing bands.
Hasty prayers the Trader mutters,
Then to earth his body flings ;
'Gainst the plain his bosom flutters,
Like a wounded eagle's wings.

While his sense and spirit tremble
 O'er eternity's dark stream,
 Buried memories reassemble,
 Thick as forms that crowd a dream ;
 Shaking their pale, spectral fingers,
 And their solemn warning heads,
 Round his soul each shadow lingers,
 In its steps another treads.
 Ay! each deed of smallest moment,
 That had brought him joy or pain,
 Since forgot in life's fierce foment,
 He in thought lives o'er again:
 Thus is memory's chain oft shaken
 By Death's pallid, trembling hand,
 Thus the ringing links awaken,
 Ere he bursts the silver band.
 Into one dread view is crowded
 Childhood, youth, and manhood's days,
 As some landscape, night has shrouded
 Gleams beneath the lightning's rays ;

And as suddenly vanished
'Mid the awful night of death ;
For the choking sand had banished
Thought, and sense, and struggling breath.
Sadly, now, the death diminished
Wend their way, for half the band
Has fore'er its travel finished,
Resting 'neath the yellow sand.

Who shall tell the maid,
That beneath the shade
Of tamarinds roaming,
With a longing heart,
Whence would not depart
The hope of thy coming,
That thy body lies,
Hid from human eyes,
Where sand slowly creeping,
Like the drifted snow
When the north winds blow,
Is over thee heaping ?

Not the ruthless man
Who with ataghan
 Thy girdle's band parted,
And, like vulture, tore
Forth the golden ore,
 Then o'er the plain darted.
Not the mournful band,
Who to Yeman's land,
 Without thee, departed;
For full well they know,
By the tears that flow,
 She'd fall broken hearted.
And the caravans
Still the maiden scans,
 Beneath her long lashes;
While her soft eyes gleam,
Like the mountain stream
 That o'er the rock dashes.
Fixed, then, grew her look,
Fixed as that pale brook

Ice bound by December ;
And gay songs she sings,
Poor disjointed things,
Tears fall to remember.
O'er the desert waste,
Rapt in thought, she paced—
Ah ! thoughts without meaning ;
Tottering o'er the tomb,
Robbed of all her bloom,
The poor lily is leaning.
On a little mound,
Rising from the ground,
She oft is seen weeping ;
As her tears it drinks,
Little the maid thinks
Beneath He is sleeping.

Ceased the lay, the storm God chaunted
From the wild Æolian lyre ;
Yet by solemn fancies haunted,
Through the noontide's scorching fire,
 Till the purple ray
 Of departing day
Warned me of my lengthened stay,
'Neath the spreading branches' shade,
Gazing 'mong the leaves I laid ;
Musing if the mighty hands,
That in equilibrium's bands
Hold Water, Fire, and raging Wind,
Should one curbing chain unbind,
Loose a single element,
To an uncontrolled extent,
 What pale terror then
 Would overpower men,
When back to primal chaos hurled,
Disjointed fell the shattered world !

THE DUMB GENIUS.

I believe it is the elder D'Israeli who says, that Genius consists in the power of giving expression to ideas.

ONCE I half credited the Israelite,
“ That in expression Genius consists ;”
That on the earth no Poet mute e’er lived,
Whose thoughts, most musical, were only hid
In dark, o’ershadowing silence from our ears,
Because he lacked Expression’s subtle power.
But me a lesson a Dumb Genius taught,
That swept all relics of such thoughts away ;
That sunk into my soul, and still is there ;
And, like a spectral shade, will haunt my mind,

Till its most secret history shall be told,
To mortal ears, in ever moving verse.
Lately a youth I saw, dumb from his birth,
With a strange wildness in his roving eyes,
Which ever filled with tears of huge delight
When on a form of earthly beauty resting ;
Or on a sweet, harmonious work of art—
Painting or sculpture ; or some lesser thing,
Which scarce a glance could draw from idle eyes.
Not one but saw that in his breast there dwelt
A potent spirit, which from those orbs looked,
And of each thought and act was master sole.
For when in power this spirit bright appeared,
Sweet tones came bubbling to his unclosed lips,
And there, all inarticulate, they broke,
Scattering their glory on the barren air—
Fragments of melodies ; notes rudely strung ;
Now half a prelude to some plaintive air ;
Then over every elementary form
That music owns, his rapid lips would run,

With a strange sound, unlike a human tone ;
Till all its forms and sweetest notes I heard,
Only in chaos—with surprise I heard.
One day to him a clarinet I gave ;
And ere by signs I could its use explain,
He understood it. When next time we met,
With a wild triumph flashing in his eyes,
And the poor toy strained in a close embrace,
He stood before me. I know not whether
By some finer sense, which feeling seems like,
Ever deaf men hear—for the Creator,
Whose almighty hand had placed its finger
On his silent tongue, had closed the portals
Of his ear, and thence shut out all music ;—
But I have heard, if 'tween a deaf man's teeth
Be placed a sounding instrument, he hears it.
How this may be I cannot surely tell :
Yet, if the Dumb Boy heard no sound he made,
At least, he felt the harmony, which came,
Like a long ray of purest light, upon

His listeners, and their beaming faces lit
With inspiration kindred to his own ;
As he stood 'mong us, like melodious Pan
Amid a herd of rude, uncultured clowns,
Swaying our minds, whichever way he list,
By strains which seemed to come from other
 worlds ;

So unlike earthly music were his airs,
So different, and, to me, so far above
All cultivated tones. Eye, hand and foot
Kept measure to the notes, seeming to follow
Some orchestra vast that roared within him.
Or, with low murmuring tones, sought to fling wide
The silver gates of tears, and flood the soul
With every feeling kind of sympathy,
Which, in such moments, man can feel for man.
Surely these tender melodies were formed
From pre-existent mental harmonies
Which slumbered in his breast ; from feelings
 mute,

Or not existing even, in other men.
How such a one, on whom all sound was lost,
Should, by mere force of untaught genius, thus
Such wonderful creations, body forth,
I leave to those who deem all equal born !
Long ere they found expression, I had seen
These powers and feelings starting into life,
Spreading their influence o'er the total man,
And vexing his strong spirit. Had not I
To the Dumb Boy that little wind toy given,
The great desire t' impart to other men
Part of his melody, unslaked had lain,
And all his world of music had been hid,
For want of mere expression ; though not less
Having existence in his inmost soul.
With that poor gift, his utter destiny
Seemed to himself fulfilled. Nor more he roamed,
With discontented look and glaring eyes,
And found no place to rest his thought-tossed
form.

Happy, contented, now, he musing sits
Beneath the sill of his low cottage door,
Wrapt in the cloud of natural perfumes
A thousand flowerets from their censers swing,
Teaching his instrument the varied tones
That rise, unbidden, in his placid breast ;
While o'er the tranquil scene his mild eyes roam,
Filled to the brim with waters of pure love
For all he gazes on. Oft here the Clown,
At evening journeying home, throws down his
spade,
Or stops his home-sick team, and lists to airs
That bear him, on their wings, back to fair
flowers
And songs of sweetest birds : so wild his notes,
So like the natural tones we ever hear,
In fields and groves, on warm, sunshiny days,
That I, when giving loose to fancy's vein,
Say a skylark is prisoned in his soul,
That, wheeling in its æry circles, mounts

Towards the closed portals of his voiceless mouth.
Yes! grateful, will I thank thee, poor Dumb
Bard!

Who taught this lesson for a paltry toy ;—
For he on me as benefactor looks—
O! rich exchange! That I could ever add
Such joy to sense, such wisdom to the mind,
At cost like this, the price I e'er would find !

THE CALENDAR.

Here emblemed, on this printed page
Is fickle Man from Youth to Age.



JANUARY.

Lo ! from beyond the chill and dusky north,
The primal month, which leads the rolling year,
A Youth in snowy robes brings proudly forth,
With ruddy cheeks and look of careless cheer ;
Nor on that Youth's bright face dwells anxious
fear ;
Or aught, upon his smooth and trustful brow,
Than brave resolves an ordered course to steer,

And towards some glittering port his way to
plow ;
Which course he registers with many a solemn
vow.

Full gaily looks he o'er the ice clad ground,
Not deeming ever other robe it wears
Than gilded snows, which everywhere abound :
So forth with confidence the Youngling fares,
Breathing the rare invigorating airs,
Which seem to give his sinews giant force ;
Nor 'tween his hopes and him stand threatening
cares,
To daunt him in his destined, onward course ;
And his heart treads its bosom like a new loosed
horse.

Towards the dim future turns his brightened eye
To found a kingdom in the coming time ;
And shapes himself a glorious destiny—
Heroic deeds, and mighty aims sublime,

To be accomplished in his manhood's prime ;
Which win the dazzling heights of fame and
power
That, gold and roseate, deck the distant clime,
And on th' horizon beckoning seem to tower :
Thus show those glittering peaks to Youth at
sunrise hour.

He joins in sports to cheat the lagging day ;
Where on the surface of the frost-stilled lake,
Which the high hills and lofty woods embay,
To fence from ruffling winds the freezing flake,
The merry skaters now their pleasure take ;
And start the echoes in the stiffened trees,
As their loud laughs the icy barrier shake,
At some skilled comrade who before them flees,
And, by a well ta'en turn, avoids the band with
ease.

Then group in knots the late born news to hear,
Of battles fought beneath the southern skies ;

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When cracks the ice, and, with but half felt fear,
Apart the crowd of gossips shouting hies,
Buzzing away, like swarms of startled flies,
To join with them who hurl the bounding ball ;
While He, alone, the graceful pastime plies,
And sweeps, like bird, in circles large or small,
As from his steel-shod heels the flashing ice-
drops fall.

Next, by the hearth-stone's red and crackling
blaze,
Cons o'er some tale, and all the moral skips ;
Or with bent brow, which half his scorn betrays,
Lists to grave truths which fall from aged lips ;
But nought of honied wisdom there he sips,
Nor by advice will any danger shun ;
He, confident, the well meant lesson slips,
And vows the Aged have into dotage run,
That lengthening shadows ever mark the setting
sun.

He deems our Life is not the dreary thing
Which care-worn men, with tearful faces, tell ;
That honied Hope bears not both sweet and
sting ;
That they who weep have by their folly fell,
And, with weak tears, their fancied sorrows
swell ;
Seeking to daunt, with threat of darker hour,
Those minds whose powers their little might
excel ;
That all must yield to Youth's resistless power :
Thus oft miscalls Hope's gift prophetic Reason's
dower.

FEBRUARY.

Now to its second term strides on the year,
And ⁸lengthening days foretell mild Spring is near.
One day's warm sunshine clears the frozen earth
Of ice and snow, until another birth

Of the rough north whitens the softening land,
And binds the plains and streams in Winter's
numbing band.

Now on the smoking ground falls spring-like rain,
And hub deep sinks the rocking, labouring wain ;
While, to their knees, the panting horses plunge,
Striving, with constant strain, or sudden longe,
To free the ponderous car ; and then, ere night,
The earth puts on the chilling, wintery white ;
While, o'er the scarred and deep indented ground,
The jarring waggon flies with rumbling sound.

Impatient of control, the high fed team
Strain at their bits, and snort the jetting steam
From their raised heads ; while scarce a shallow
dint

Their iron-shod feet can make—the ground, like
flint,

Rings 'neath their clattering tread. The shud-
dering stream,

Sporting, erewhile, beneath the sun's warm beam,

Shrinks, murmuring, in its icy bars, and 'plains
Like some proud spirit who, amid his chains,
Has had one distant glimpse of liberty
Eclipsed by ruthless, twofold slavery.

Winter seems sporting with the genial smile
Of budding Spring ; and to his cave awhile
Draws his rough form, to tempt the Maiden forth ;
Then, shouting, rushes from the icy north,
And drives her southward to her torrid plains,
Followed by all her frightened twittering trains.
Where are thy high resolves and solemn vows,
Whilom thou mad'st thou Youth with thoughtful
brows ?

Now is the time to strike the destined blow,
Now pluck thy laurels, ere the chances go !
“ Ah ! no, I'll rest till gentle, balmy Spring
Nerves my young arm ; for failing efforts bring
Scorn, hard to bear, upon the youthful head.
Wait till rude Winter's snows and winds have fled ;
For now the season's face is dark and chill—

Who danger tempts stands friendless, if in ill.”
So half through bashfulness, and half through
dread,
From his great aims the shrinking Youth is led.
Thus oftentimes Chances ’cause they seem not fair
Are lost: such Fortune Time again may never
bear.

MARCH.

March the reeling trees is shaking,
And their withered twigs is breaking
In his nervous hand ;
While the new loosed streams are dashing,
Round their rocky barriers flashing ;
Or the frost-rent strand
Crumbles ’neath their furious rushing,
And above the banks they’re gushing
Deluging the land.

From adown the quaking mountain,
Fed at snow's dissolving fountain,
See the torrent gleam !
Rending oak, and bordering willow,
With its rushing, roaring billow,
As, with awful scream,
Part both clinging roots and branches,
Ere the earth-born giant launches,
Helpless down the stream.

Now the snow capped hill o'erpowered
By the icy mass, which towered
'Bove it, like a crown,
Slowly its huge burden sunders ;
Casting off the load which thunders,
Crashing, dragging down
Earth and rocks, in mingled masses,
Till the solid tempest passes
O'er some fated town.

Now while change o'er all is going,
Dreaming Youth arise, be doing!

Out of dreary storms,
Out of elemental foment,
In the wildest, darkest moment,
Sprang all beauteous forms.
Where the moral strife is raging,
Where the panting war is waging,
Manly greatness warms.

Ever Anarchy presages
Better days to coming ages,
Days of calm repose.
After Pain has had her measure,
Trips upon her heels soft Pleasure,
Smiling as she goes.
Out of rank corruption coming,
Spreading incense with its blooming,
Springs the fragrant rose.

Timid Youth, to wounds a stranger,
Chides, yet shuns the threatening danger—

“ Mad or blind are they

Who upon the treacherous ocean,
In the tempest’s fierce commotion,

Make their first essay.”

Thus the Youth who fear was scoffing,

Now his boasted courage doffing,

Weakly turns away.



APRIL.

To April glides the changing year,
The Month which laughs amid her frown ;
Now on her lids there hangs a tear,
Or weltering showers the meadows drown ;
Then half a smile the earth cheers up,
And nectarous draughts the sun-beams quaff

From the young blossom's brimming cup ;
Or, with one universal laugh,
Nature's young, giddy scions shout.
Birds scream from out the dancing trees ;
The blue-eyed violets wink about,
And toss their odours on the breeze ;
The gurgling streams suck in the springs,
And seem to leap along more fleet,
As on the rocky pathway rings
Sound of their twinkling silver feet ;
The grass steals forth with face all wan,
By the life-giving sun beguiled,
To see if surly March is gone—
All Nature, like a new-born child,
Leaps on its fruitful mother's lap,
To win by its innoxious wiles—
If such a gracious thing may hap—
Its great Creator's golden smiles :
For there's a glory in the hour
Beyond what e'en the sun can lend,

Beyond the grass and opening flower,
A something in which Heaven must blend.
Creative Power is on the earth ;
Through the wide laboratory ring
Sounds which announce each wondrous birth,
As ply the busy hands of Spring.
Now, while warm sunshine sheds a light
Upon the flower decked, grassy meads,
No winter blast thy hopes to blight,
Say Youth, where are thy mighty deeds ?
The sun calls forth from out the earth
A warm and fructifying steam,
That to each senseless thing gives birth—
Leaps not thy heart beneath its beam ?
Can it not wake thy sluggish mind,
Can it not stir thy nerveless hands ;
Or drowsy sloth's strong chains unbind,
And melt their stringent, icy bands ?
“ Oh ! yes, within my soul I feel
The trumpet call of glorious Spring ;

Its breathings o'er my senses steal,
And make my quivering heartstrings ring
In concord with the joyous day.
Now my crude schemes I'll shape anew,
To smooth the rougher parts away,
Ere trust them to the world's keen view."
While thus in dreams the Weakling strays,
Which bring not either ill or good,
To dreams his first resolve decays :
But still rolls on Time's awful flood,
And bears along the heedless Boy
Where new, more tempting sights arise ;
Who deems each whirling eddy joy,
Slights Good to grasp some present prize.



M A Y.

What Witch could shape this balmy day
But buxom, blue-eyed, sweet-breathed May !

Peeping from the roses sheen,
Peeping from the grasses green,
Peeping through the ether blue,
And heard when shouts the blithe cuckoo ;
Or when the blue-bird's quivering cry
Drops, like a sunbeam, from the sky ;
Or when the swallow's scolding note
Seems in the very ear to float,
Then, in a moment, far away,
You scarce can catch its distant lay.
All is life, and all is joy !
Art thou he, thou truant Boy !
Who planned thyself a wondrous fate,
Above the vulgar herd's estate ;
To soar far o'er the nether crowd,
And bathe thy wings in glory's cloud ?
Now while life wakes all around,
Why stand with looks upon the ground ;
Why sigh and blush with eye-lids wet,
Like Venus caught in Vulcan's net ?

What have such tender signs presaged?
Is thy heart's thirst for Fame assuaged?
“ Ah, no ! Within yon forest's shade
I have wooed a blue-eyed Maid ;
Fairer never trod dull earth,
Fairer never gave love birth !
'Neath yon holly's spreading green
Maids have crowned her Beauty's Queen.
There a May-day feast is held
Which blends our sports with vanished eld.
There Robin Hood with bow in hands,
Though outlaw, next his Sovereign stands,
To shoot, with all but Robin's skill,
The arrows winged with gray goose quill ;
As drawn to ear, with ancient art,
From the long bow they whirring dart.
There Morrice Dancers quaintly dight,
With measured step, show Kemp's* delight ;

* William Kemp, a celebrated Morrice Dancer of the reign of Elizabeth.

As to the flute and tabor's sound,
With gartered bells, the Dancers bound.
There too the youthful Wrestlers strain,
Sole prize, their Sovereign's smile to gain ;
Or make the echoing forest ring,
As ponderous bar or sledge they fling.
And when the ruder sports are o'er,
The Maids and Youths shall skip the floor
Of springing turf, by Nature spread,
In many a wild and mazy tread.
Ale's foaming cups our sports shall close,
With feast that wakes no after throes
In throbbing head or burning toe ;
So strong our healthful blood will flow."
Thus love and rustic revelry
Ambition's dreams have forced to flee.

JUNE.

June, when roses deck the ground,
Scatters sweetest smells around ;
Flowers which choicest breath exhale,
Bushes, trees, and vines that trail
On trellis or along the ground,
In full blown majesty abound.
Birds, within the close leaved groves,
Whisper to their near perched loves ;
'Neath the graceful panther steals
Purring at his coy dame's heels ;
While the now all fearless deer
His agile foeman passes near,
Trailing towards the herded does ;
Or, with locked horns, and sharp hoof's blows,
Wrestles with some rival bold,
Tangled in his antler's hold.
The eager bull attempts the wall,
With many a smothered deep-mouthed call,

As he scents the meek faced kine,
Gazing with their full-orbed eyne
On him sundered from them far
By an envious stony bar ;
Uncropped the tender grass he yields,
And roars around the trampled fields.
From his knotted forehead glow
Eyes which ask but for a foe ;
While the froth in spotted flakes
From his gnashing muzzle breaks.
Filled with rabid love he burns ;
And on his master boldly turns,
Driving the frightened, trembling clown
Headlong to the neighbouring town.
See, where comes a white robed train,
Winding through the hawthorn lane !
She within that merry band,
With chaplet crowned and flower in hand,
I deem some youthful village Bride
Moving by her Bridegroom's side.

He who on her fondly gazes,
Ever as her eyes she raises,
Is the Bridegroom, is the Man
Whose hopes his powers to do outran.
Tell me fickle, changing Boy,
Is this Ambition's stern employ?
"I have won the blue-eyed Maid
From her native sylvan shade;
Bound her youthful heart to me
By Love's eternal mystery.
Now to the village church we wend
To bind those bonds time ne'er shall rend—
Happy captives! willing slaves!
Love his wing in triumph waves,
And fans the foggy airs away,
That nought may mar our wedding-day;
Banishing each boding fear
By words which she and I can hear—
Just hear, as the low accents start
Bubbling upward from the heart;
And spread a warm and joyous glow

As through the thrilling form they flow.
Hymen, in saffron mantle dight,
Beckons on the lagging night ;
Whose rosy torch shall lend a ray
More welcome than the glaring day.
Then, while life is blessed by Love,
Let not stern Ambition move
His iron hand, to quench a fire
Lit by genial, soft desire !
Let not Wisdom's sudden chill
All the shuddering senses fill,
To nip that earliest, brightest bud
Which, like a lily o'er the flood,
Shows that the turbid stream of Life,
Dark with the rushing Passions' strife,
Yet bears upon its troubled breast
One flower which, star-like, swims at rest,
Clings to the hidden depths below,
While 'bove the wave its blossoms show !"
Thus led by Hymen's luring ray,
Excuse is found for each delay.

JULY.

Now wakes the busy hum of insect life,
Beneath the glowing sun's prolific heat,
And all the air with moving forms is rife,
That with their gauzy oars the thin tide beat,
In myriad swarm which, like a vapour, swims,
And flickers dimly o'er the damper ground ;
Or, like a bark, some bulkier voyager skims,
Fanning along with a low droning sound.
Now ply the ne'er tired bees their honied trade,
Rocking upon the robbed, yet unmarred flowers ;
The four-winged dragon's rapid course is staid
On some tall stem which o'er the streamlet towers ;
Pale butterflies seek out the half dried pool,
To rest their yellow wings upon the brink ;
The beetle nods within the thicket cool,
And seems, a grave philosopher, to think
O'er all the little world beneath his view.
Golden, and green, and red, and dusky brown,

Twitter and hum the motley, joyous crew ;
Like sensual men who would their short life drown,
'Cause of its briefness, in a round of joy ;
Seeking to shut those avenues of thought
Which work their silken spirits sad annoy ;
Not heeding that through suffering peace is
wrought.

Who toils beneath the burning noonday sun,
With hardened hands by frequent work em-
browned ;

Lest the first promise which his labour won,
With full success be not at harvest crowned ?
Who bends to pluck the rank and choking weed
From out the bosom of the springing corn ;
Lest canker or the blighting rust they breed :—
For of dull sloth are half such evils born.

Is this Fame's Votary strayed so far away,
E'en from the broad, oft travelled, beaten road ?
Why toil you here in menial array ?
Can work like this your steps to honour goad ?

“ Ah no! but I with bended back must win
That which will nourish from the well tilled earth.
Each coming day sees a new care begin ;
Till half despairing of my labour’s worth,
I well nigh throw aside the useless spade,
Thinking my life dear bought at such a price,
By which but famine’s awful jaws are staid :
Then dreams of self-dealt death my thoughts entice,
As, all o’erwearied, I move musing home ;
Where soft eyes on me from the spindle beam,
And chubby faces round me lisping come,
To drive away the dark and selfish dream.
Urged on by these, another day I toil ;
For who will feed those mouths when I am gone ?
Thus homely ties may guilty actions foil ;
Thus man to good is oft by children won !
Cheered on at home, I still my work resume,
And daily toil, and daily win a smile ;
But here, I ween, Ambition has small room
From Duty’s path a Father’s steps to guile.”

AUGUST.

The dusty grass hangs down its languid head,
And on its stalk dries up the sun-burned flower,
The vernal green from the curled leaves has fled,
All verdure shrinks beneath the sun's fierce
power ;
It seems as if a nipping frost had passed
From the north's puffed and chilling cheeks, to
blast
Poor Nature slumbering in her summer bower.

The kine stand restless in the shrunken stream,
Lashing the flies with oft reverted tail ;
Or 'neath the trees escape the sultry beam,
Leaving the pasture where tumultuous sail
Inflaming gnats, that dance in myriad crowds ;
Deep in the grove the listless bird enshrouds,
And stills his warbling to a plaintive wail.

The springs are dried upon the mountain's head,
And sheep steal down where erst a torrent
 roared ;
While opening seams within its blackened bed,
 Like dumb mouths, beg that moisture may be
 poured,
To cheer its banks, and glad the withering lands ;
The bordering shrubs bend down with folded
 hands,
And one still prayer goes upward to earth's
 Lord.

All sounds are hushed, save the sharp rattling cry
 Of grasshoppers, and the shrill crickets' trill ;
Or when the swift winged bees go booming by ;
 Which sounds but make the hour appear more
 still,
And wake no notice in the listless ear ;
For that we note not which we ever hear ;
 Or Nature's voice might move Man's stubborn
 Will.

It seems as if the noontide ne'er would pass ;
The blinding sun hangs fixed above our heads,
Encompassed by a sky of burning brass,
That on the land a fiery terror sheds ;
Driving the labourer from his half tilled field,
To seek the drowsy grove's protecting shield,
Where sleep's light foot upon his eyelids treads.

But who stands gasping in the sultry air,
Which nigh o'ercomes him ere his sinews tire,
And seems to flicker like the vapour rare
That rises o'er some huge and scorching fire ?
Close by his side two puny children delve,
With tiny hands, that scarce can grasp the helve
With which they imitate their labouring sire.

Lo 'tis the Dreamer ! Man what do you here ;
And why toil here these tender children twain ?
Wakes not the sun thy heart's paternal fear,
Lest his fierce beams should sap the youthful
brain,

And fatal madness on your offspring shed ;
Or sudden strike the opening blossoms dead,
Never on earth to live and bloom again ?

“ I fear ; but ah ! ’tis sullen Fate’s command
That they by work their painful bread shall earn ;
Nor loitering idly by the wayside stand,
Though summer’s fires like living embers burn.
Here must I point the rough, laborious way,
And lead the march while beams the lucid day ;
Or, loosing me, where might their footsteps
turn ! ”



SEPTEMBER.

The yellow leaves which now appear
Upon the trees’ green heads,
Like those first warnings, wan and drear,
Which Time departing spreads

Among the locks, from day to day,
To warn us of the tomb,
Foretel how Autumn's slow decay
Shall rob them of their bloom.
The tasseled maize has ceased to grow,
And nods its ripened ears
In many a rustling, serried row ;
No flower the landscape cheers ;
But from the black and withering limb
The bursting seed-pod falls ;
While through the stubble stiff and grim,
The merry partridge calls,
In tones so like man's whistled notes,
His prim clad dames to share
The scattered buckwheat, rye or oats
Which 'scaped the gleaner's care.
No buds put forth, no sprouts appear
In pale but healthy green,
All things proclaim the waning year,
In all decay is seen.

Nature in listless posture stands
 Among the falling leaves,
Nor plies her empty, hanging hands,
 Nor aught on earth achieves.
Ah! soon the maid, in slumber deep,
 Amid the snow shall fall ;
Nor break her heavy, torpid sleep
 Till rings the blue-bird's call ;
When scattering ice and chilling snow
 With arms revived by rest,
Across the land she'll tripping go,
 In vernal blossoms drest.
Who rustles through the withered corn,
 And plucks the yellow ears ?
While fitful on the breeze is born
 The song with which he cheers
His spirits at the tedious work—
 A childish melody !
By signs which in my memory lurk,
 I know Fame's Votary.

Still labouring at thy servile trade,
Forgetful of thy vow,
Still wielding plough, and scythe, and spade—
Say ! what can daunt thee now ?
“ Thus Man with careful hand must reap
That which his labour sowed ;
Nor sadly o’er his task should weep
Though thoughts of honour goad ;
Or tempt with golden visions bright,
His footsteps to betray ;
Which dazzle but to cheat the sight,
Arise but to decay.”
And thus with silly ancient saws,
Which Time has set for fools,
To use instead of reason’s laws,
His fickle mind he schools.

OCTOBER.

Is this the great millennium day
When holy Saints, in bright array,
 To greet their Lord shall rise ;
Or have our wandering footsteps found
The Cherub guarded, sacred ground
 Of primal Paradise ?

Ah ! no ; the hectic of decay
Is what gives beauty to the day,
 And lends it all its charms :
As oft its sweetest smile will grace
The dear, departing, heaven-lit face,
 When fading in death's arms.

But O how fair the prospect seems !
Fair as the misty land of dreams
 In which I've wondering stood :
It seems as if the evening skies
Had downward shook their gorgeous dyes
 Upon the nodding wood.

Golden, and red, and blue, and green,
With every varied tint between

That from art's mingling springs,
Appear the motley coated trees,
As stooping, soaring in the breeze,
They shake their rainbow wings.

Half hidden 'neath the yellow leaves,
The sun-burned, portly apple heaves
Upon its bending branch.

The blooming peach, the smooth cheeked pear,
The purple grapes, in clusters rare,
Downward their sly looks launch;

And nod and wink, as blow the gales,
Exhaling spicy breath that sails

The loaded air along,
To mingle with the robin's voice,
Till all the echoing vales rejoice
In rich perfume and song.

Beside the hearth-stone's ruddy blaze,
Which o'er his toil-worn features plays,
Again the Dreamer see !
Long silver locks are in his hair,
And on his brow, once smooth and fair,
A bygone misery.

But smiles, that hide all trace of woe,
Adown those thought-worn channels flow,
And speak a happy mood ;
As with his parted, froth-wreathed lips
The stiff October ale he sips,
His bustling Housewife brewed.

While o'er the heaped and spotless board,
With all of Autumn's dainties stored,
His gloating eyes are bent ;
And ever, as he bends to quaff,
Comes from the can a smothered laugh
Of gratified content.

What ho ! what thing shall balk thee now—

Thou who once wore the thoughtful brow

The mighty ever wear—

In working out thy glorious schemes,

Thy golden, hopeful, youthful dreams,

Now that thy life goes fair ?

“ What, have I toiled from morn till eve,

But in my elder days to leave

The joys which crown my lot !

No, I will taste the fruits of toil,

Enjoy the rich, but hard won spoil

My aching sinews got.”

Thus floats he down the stream of life,

Nor struggles in a manly strife,

Nor tries to breast the tide ;

But onward where the current bears,

With all the herd he listless fares,

Without a star to guide.

NOVEMBER.

Dark days and short, with fogs and sleety rain,
Foretell stern Winter soon will tread the plain ;
Though yet in mists, he o'er the land has blown,
He hides the horrors that engird his throne :
But morn and eve the chained and sluggish brook
Reflected shows its tyrant's icy look.
No herb puts forth ; the sapless trees are bare,
Nor wave their boughs upon the gusty air ;
But stiff and grim, all life and beauty gone,
Their bony shapes make drear the withered lawn.
Unless, perchance, the freezing rain-drops beat
On the brown trunks, and all the branches sheet
In one thick coating of clear, glittering ice ;
When Winter shows a dazzling, gay device,
That shames bright Summer on her fairest day—
If o'er the scene the wizard sun should play ;
For instant from a silver ocean rise
Shapes which make earth an Eastern Paradise.

Trees all of gold with pendent rubies hung,
Great rows of pearls on bending branches strung,
Huge evergreens with precious emeralds dight,
Carbuncles, amethysts, and diamonds bright,
With all the gems which men esteem most
rare,

Commingled flash upon the frosty air.

Once more upon a cheerful fire-side gaze,
And see the Dreamer nodding o'er the blaze ;
Now sunken far in garrulous old age,
He wastes, unheard, his thoughts and precepts
sage.

Goes o'er his life from youth's first sunny hour,
Through manhood's noon, till age's shadows
lower.

O'er scenes of youth his roaming thoughts most
brood,

When Hope her blossoms on his pathway strewed ;
And ever memory sheds a clearer ray
On these first deeds than acts of yesterday :

As when a traveller some high hill has won,
And turns his back against the setting sun,
To see if haply he can trace the way
O'er which he toiled throughout the weary day,
Dark grows the late trod valley 'neath his gaze,
While far away the long past summits blaze.
Or gains, perchance, some Youth's impatient ear,
Who restless stands the tedious Sage to hear,
And tells to him his varied tale of life,
His youth's fair hopes, his manhood's eager
 strife ;
Warns him what paths to choose, and what to
 shun,
Shows on what rocks unconscious voyagers run ;
Then breathes a sigh of heavy, heart-felt pain,
And wishes he might live his life again.
Nor knows that he the selfsame course would tread,
For all the snow that crowns his sapient head ;
Or with some more fantastic follies stray,
In untried paths, which lead as far away

From noble aims. Or having gained his end,
The seeming substance might to vapour blend ;
For oft the distant fair is present foul,
And 'neath a palm a lion's foot may prowl.



DECEMBER.

At last, 'mid bleak December's awful ice,
The earth-worn Wanderer sadly sits him down.
But earthly joys no longer him entice,
Eternal thoughts his palsied senses drown,
And gathering doubts around him darkly frown.
High on a beetling crag he takes his seat,
Whose rocky base with countless wrecks is
 strown ;
Beneath he hears the sullen waters beat,
As on the land they dash their many trampling
 feet.

His eager look across the billow strays,
Sees now a light, and now a passing sail ;
Which ever as he on them rests his gaze,
Like cheating phantoms, into darkness fail :
At which his care-wrung brow turns ashy pale ;
And more intent he pries into the gloom ;
While fiercer still dread doubts his soul assail,
And louder still the thundering waters boom,
And mists arise, that chill like a new opened tomb.

Yes ! seated high on Time's perplexing rock,
Beneath Eternity's dark waters roar,
Whose sights and sounds his quailing spirits
 shock—
Sees now a helpless babe cast safe ashore,
Now a strong man engulfed for evermore ;
There swims a martyr with a brow of hope,
There sinks a king amid his precious store,
There sage philosophers at rushes grope,
And think with them to reach that dreadful
 ocean's scope.

Low sounds of woe, and dying wails arise ;
And shouts of cheer above the tumult soar,
Mingled with strains which seem from Paradise,
That, for a moment, still the deafening roar,
And calm the billows till the tones are o'er.
These sights and sounds his wakeful senses
drink—

But where go they who reach the mist wrapped
shore,

Where they who in the boiling current sink ?
No faith, no hope is his, he can but doubting think.

Then peers he wondering o'er the dizzy steep,
On that wild sea where he must erelong swim,
Whose thickening horrors coldly round him
creep ;

Till, lost in dread, his straining eyes grow dim,
And heavy woe-drops down his pale cheeks
skim.

Or on his knees in dull despair he falls ;

For not a ray of hope comes up to him,
Though, mad with fear, he to the billows calls,
Whose dark, mysterious depth his staggering heart
appals.

For comfort then he earthward turns his eyes,
But sees one line of long, unbroken snow ;
All cheerless round him the cold landscape lies,
While all the world seems laughing at his woe ;
Each old familiar object bids him go ;
Or on his fears in solemn mockery smiles.
Then turns he where the ceaseless waters flow ;
For nought on earth his sinking heart beguiles,
And every glimpse of life new sorrow on him piles.

On him he feels a cold and ruthless hand,
That ever urges towards the fearful brink ;
Nor can he the relentless grasp withstand,
Or from the firm locked fingers slyly shrink ;
Now o'er their balls his palsied eyelids sink,

Blindly he clutches at the slippery shore—

My God! what can the mind at such time think!

A plunge, half swallowed in the angry roar,
And the big waves roll on as darkly as before.

THE SHARK.

A BALLAD.

A sailor leaned o'er the vessel's side,
And gazed in the rippling sea—
“Christ save us!” said he, and started back,
“A shark swims under the lee.”

His comrades looked close under the lee,
With a fixed and glassy stare ;
They saw a fin and a glittering back
Now sink, and now rise in air.

Ho ! bait a strong line, the captain cried,
Then muttered a passing curse ;
For the greedy shark still followed on,
Like mourner the gloomy herse.

All day, all night, the daintiest bait
Towed close to the shark's fell jaw—
“ He follows the ship, and not the bait ! ”
“ Yet,” quoth Ned, “ he'll fill his maw.”

The sick man lay on his restless bed,
A fever had scorched his brain ;
While the hot blood gushed in lava tides,
And hissed through each bursting vein.

Black Edward leaned o'er the sick man's bed,
And glared on his enemy ;
His head, like a coiled snake, he bent—
“ A shark swims under the lee ! ”

Great God, but it was a fearful thing
To hear the poor sufferer rave !
To see the red flushes come and go,
Like sun-beams over the wave !

And ever he muttered in low tones
Of the bitterest agony,
While his heart boomed like a tolling bell,
“ A shark swims under the lee !”

He bounded up from his narrow bed,
And fell on his bended knee ;
“ Christ save me,” cried he, and loudly wept,
“ From the shark under the lee !”

Black Edward laughed o’er the vessel’s side
As the sun set bloody red ;
The shark lept up as for very joy—
Quoth one, “ The sick man is dead.”

They poised the corse o'er the rushing waves ;

Alas ! how their spirits sank !

“Don't throw him,” they cried, “to yonder
shark !”

Black Ned kicked over the plank.

With a bound sprang forth the greedy shark,

And his horrid jaws upraised,

He tore the shroud like a rotten rag—

The crew in pale horror gazed.

He dragged the torn body from the shroud,

And the sea was red with gore—

“God shield us !” they cried, and closed their
eyes ;

But the shark was ne'er seen more.

SONG OF THE SCORNFUL LADY.

AH! my Love hath left my side,
How I smiled when we two parted!
He hath fled his grief to hide;
Proud he strode, but broken hearted.

His heart was my little lyre;
O'er its strings my fingers flinging,
I woke notes of misery dire;
Though the tones his breast were wringing.

Know ye maids what secret bliss,
Lurks in notes so agonizing,
When Man proudly bends to kiss
Lips that quiver with despising ?

Ha ! I played it o'er and o'er ;
Every note that misery raiseth—
How I'd laugh to see him pour
Tears, when he deems no one gazeth !

But, ah me ! I needs am sad :
Those last tones too well betoken
That no more my ear they 'll glad ;
For alas ! my lyre is broken.

Cheer me ! why have I repined ?
Beauty hearts will ever render ;
But I fear I ne'er shall find
Heart 'twill utter tones so tender.

SONNET.

WHAT trophies of lost splendor line the way,
That sad, laborious path which lies between
Expression and Idea! Where words are seen
As sunrise mists appear, which hide the ray
That, unobscured, might break to perfect day;
Though glow the clouds with red and golden
 sheen,
Beneath a sun, far brighter, shines we ween,
Hid by the mists that form this prospect gay.
Thus when vague words the thoughts of Genius
 light,

And spread a splendor o'er the else dark mass ;
Though they may glow, the pure Idea is lost,
And nought but dim reflection meets the sight.
Sad is it that such light from earth should pass !
For want of language to oblivion tossed.

SONNET.

MUSIC.



SWEET Poesy's twin Sister—perfect Art!
Thou only can'st express the harmonies,
The marvellous ideal melodies,
That from Thought's wonderful orchestras start,
And roll in torrents o'er the Poet's heart!
Thou only, ere the subtle idea flees,
Can, st note by note, take down the symphonies,
Ere their fresh glories from the mind depart!
Thou dealest not with words, but sounds; nor dies

Full half the lustre of the burning thought,
Ere fixed by art among realities;
But every glorious tone and note is caught!
Ah! from poor Poesy what splendor flies .
In that sad passage—what decay is wrought!

SONNET.

“SHOW me a miracle,” the Atheist said,
“And I’ll believe!” Does he not truly see
A miracle appear in every tree,
When by the sap the budding leaves are fed ;
Or when by spring the teeming fields are spread
With vernal flowers? Or can the abject plea,
That places law o’er God, avail? In me
A constant, never failing trust is bred,
Not by their violation, but by laws
’Neath which all Nature moves. Should the laws
fail,

I then might doubt the great, directing Cause ;
Might then the Christian creed unawed assail,
And give blind Chance the credit, without pause ;
But not while Power and Harmony prevail.

SONNET.

O tell me not that gloomy solitude
Reigns o'er the desert vast, or hermit's cell!
Nay, but in cities, where together dwell
Hearts with discordant principles imbued.
He who hath made it willingly his choice
'Mid nature's smiling wilderness to dwell,
May hear, from lofty crag and woody fell,
Tones sweeter far to him than e'en Man's voice.
But oh, the hell that lurks within the heart,
When soul with soul in union bound we see;

Yet stand, like banished men, far, far apart,
Forbid to join that joyful company.

Oh, 'tis a sight would draw from Hate a tear,
To see one standing thus—as I stand here !

SONNET.

[WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF WORDSWORTH'S POEMS.]



HERE Nature's voice speaks from the glowing page;
Now with high melody the numbers swell,
Now murmuring low, soft as Proteus' shell.
Here may'st thou learn from Wisdom's lofty Sage,
Those secret yearnings of the inmost heart,
Which the rapt soul, soaring beyond its clay,
'Mong the harmonious spheres, in upper day,
Breathes to itself in music. Here thou'lt start
To see thoughts inexpressible to thee,

Murmurings in holy contemplation's hour,
Whisperings of high angelic rhapsody,
Which Man's weak voice to utter ne'er had power,
Till heavenly Wordsworth, holy Nature's Tongue!
Struck his seraphic lyre, and musing sung.

ODE TO A MOUNTAIN OAK.



I.

PROUD mountain giant whose majestic face,
From thy high watch tower on the steadfast rock,
Looks calmly on the trees that throng thy base,
How long hast thou withstood the tempest's shock?
How long hast thou looked down on yonder vale
Sleeping in sunshine 'fore thee ;
Or bent thy ruffled brow, to let the gale
Steer its white, drifting sails just o'er thee ?

II.

Strong link 'tween vanished ages !
 Thou hast a sage and reverend look ;
 As if life's struggle, through its varied stages,
 Were stamped on thee, as in a book.
 Thou hast no voice to tell what thou hast seen,
 Save a low moaning in thy troubled leaves ;
 And canst but point thy scars, and shake thy head,
 With solemn warning, in the sunbeam's sheen ;
 And show how Time the mightiest thing bereaves,
 By the sear leaves that rot upon thy bed.

III.

Type of long suffering Power !
 E'en in my gayest hour,
 Thou'dst still my tongue, and send my spirit far,
 To wander in a labyrinth of thought ;
 For thou hast waged with Time unceasing war,
 And out of pain hast strength and beauty brought.

Thou amidst storms and tempests hadst thy birth,
Upon these bleak and scanty sheltering rocks,
Nor much save storm and wrath, hast known on
earth ;

Yet nobly hast thou bode the fiercest shocks
That Circumstance can pour on patient Worth.

IV.

I see thee springing in the vernal time,
A sapling weak from out the barren stone,
To dance with May upon the mountain peak ;
Pale leaves put forth to greet the genial clime,
And roots shoot down life's sustenance to seek,
While mere existence was a joy alone—

O thou wert happy then !

On Summer's heat thy tinkling leaflets fed,
Each fibre toughened, and a little crown
Of green upon thy modest brow was spread,
To catch the rain and shake it gently down.

156 ODE TO A MOUNTAIN OAK.

But then came Autumn, when
Thy leaves, like blasted hopes, fell dead ;
And sadly on the gale
Thou dropp'dst them one by one—
Dropp'dst them, with a low, sad wail,
On the cold, unfeeling stone.
Next Winter seized thee in his iron grasp,
And shook thy bruised and straining form ;
Or locked thee in his icicle's cold clasp,
And piled upon thy head the shorn cloud's snowy
fleece.
Wert thou not joyful, in this bitter storm,
That the green honours, which erst decked thy
head,
Sage Autumn's slow decay, had mildly shed ?
Else, with their weight, they'd given thy ills in-
crease,
And dragged thee helpless from thy upturn bed.

V.

Year after year, in kind or adverse fate,
Thy branches stretched, and thy young twigs put
forth,

Nor changed thy nature with the season's date :
Whether thou wrestled'st with the gusty north,
Or beat the driving rain to glittering froth,
Or shook the snow storm from thy arms of might,
Or drank the balmy dews on summer's night ;—
Laughing in sunshine, writhing in the storm,

Yet wert thou still the same !

Summer spread forth thy towering form,
And Winter strengthened thy great frame.

Achieving thy destiny

On went'st thou sturdily,
Shaking thy green flags in triumph and jubilee !

VI.

From thy secure and sheltering branch
The wild bird pours her glad and fearless lay,
That, with the sunbeams, falls upon the vale,
Adding fresh brightness to the smile of day.
'Neath those broad boughs the youth has told
 love's tale;
And thou hast seen his hardy features blanch,
Heard his snared heart beat like a prisoned
 bird,
Fluttering with fear, before the Fowler laid;
While his bold figure shook at every word—
The strong man trembling at a timid maid!
And thou hast smiled upon their children's play;
Seen them grow old, and seer, and pass away.
Heard the low prattle of the thoughtless child,
Age's cold wisdom, and the lessons mild
Which patient mothers to their offspring say;—

Yet art thou still the same!

Man may decay ;

Race after race, may pass away ;

The Great may perish, and their very fame

Rot day by day—

Rot noteless with their once inspired clay :

Still, as at their birth,

Thou stretchest thy long arms above the earth—

Type of unbending Will !

Type of majestic, self-sustaining Power !

Elate in sunshine, firm when tempests lower,

May thy calm strength my wavering spirit fill !

O let me learn from thee,

Thou proud and steadfast tree,

To bear unmurmuring what stern Time may send ;

Nor 'neath life's ruthless tempests bend :

But calmly stand like thee,

Though wrath and storm shake me—

Though vernal hopes in yellow Autumn end—

And, strong in Truth, work out my destiny.

160 ODE TO A MOUNTAIN OAK.

Type of long-suffering Power !
Type of unbending Will !
Strong in the tempest's hour,
Bright when the storm is still ;
Rising from every contest with an unbroken heart,
Strengthened by every struggle, emblem of might
 thou art !
Sign of what Man can compass, spite of an adverse
 state,
Still, from thy rocky summit, teach us to war with
 Fate !

A SNOW STORM IN APRIL.

OLD Winter's last greeting,
As slowly retreating,
Snow flying, hail beating ;
 The warrior grim
His last stand is making,
His last lance is breaking,
His last vengeance taking,
 His glories grow dim.

On green grass he's hailing,
At young leaves is railing,
His banners are trailing
 From yon dusky cloud ;
But young leaves dance sprightly,
Gay blossoms gleam brightly,
The rills laugh full lightly
 At th' old monarch proud.

Though the flowers are quaking
At stern Winter's shaking,
Bent almost to breaking,
 They lovelier are ;
For on their leaves dancing,
Their beauties enhancing,
Bright jewels are glancing,
 And flashing afar.

Gay sunbeams are falling,
Old Winter appalling ;
The blue-bird is calling
 The Spring's battle-cry.

Though snow drifts are sleeping
'Neath hedges, see peeping,
And over them weeping

The violet's soft eye!

Each snow flake descending,
The sun's rays are blending
To rain drops, ere ending

Their fall to the earth.

The blossoms' cheeks burning
The hail-stones are spurning,
Their cold terrors turning
To tears of bright mirth.

Hark! Winter is beating
A mournful retreating,
Through forests is fleeting

Before the Sun's might—

Whose banners are streaming,
Whose trophies are gleaming,
Whose smile is soft beaming

O'er valley and height.

JULIA'S SLIPPERS.

A FAIRY TALE.

FAIRY Mab and Oberon
Sat a moon-lit bank upon.
Mab upon a daisy soft
Rocked her tiny form aloft.
Tired of dance and elfin play,
At her feet King Oberon lay ;
Cursing in his moody mind,
The whole race of womankind.
For anew the Queen began
That same story, on which ran

All her thoughts and all her powers,
Which had robbed of many hours
Weary Oberon's noon-day sleep ;
Till his very flesh did creep,
When the wanton Queen still chose
This dread subject of his woes.
Wiles and smiles the Queen was throwing,
Darker Oberon's brow was growing,
Curses hovered on his lips :
Round his neck his Fairy slips,
On his mouth her kisses fall—
Which to Oberon taste like gall.
What was all this coil about,
'Tween Queen Mab and Oberon stout ?
All about a robe of green,
That the Fairy Queen had seen,
By the thieving Robin ta'en
From a butterfly he'd slain.
Not a common moth I ween,
Such a fly is seldom seen ;

Brought here by a learned man
From far distant Hindostan,
Whose bright plumes, and monstrous size
Filled the Fairies with surprise ;
This with peril and with pain,
Single-handed, Rob had slain.
Then torn off its matchless skin
Light as gossamer, as thin,
Green flecked o'er with burning gold ;
On each wing two great eyes rolled,
Burning like twin spots of fire—
This was Fairy Mab's desire.
For this robe she'd gladly given
Half her birthright under heaven.
But sly Robin, cunning elf,
Asked no store of hoarded pelf ;
No ! he chose a greater prize,
Seldom such met Fairies' eyes,
Never had passed common lip,
Draught like Robin longed to sip—

A butter cup of honey-dew,
Gathered when the moon was new,
By the tributary bees
Brought great Oberon to please,
Once each year, with solemn rite ;
For which he preserved from blight
All the flowers that deck the field,
All the buds which honey yield.
Such the price that Rob had set,
Which alas ! Mab ne'er could get ;
This the cause that bred the strife
'Tween the Fairy King and Wife !
Till vexed Oberon vengeance dread
Vowed on Rob's audacious head.
What ! should he, aspiring clown,
Guzzle liquor of the crown
With his filthy crony Rush,
Hidden 'neath the holly-bush,
While in vain their Sovereign roared
For the drink that, drunk as lord,

Oft, with dizzy, reeling head,
Sent him to his rose-leaf bed !
How the blood imperial boiled
As he thought of nectar spoiled
When gulped down with vulgar haste,
Lost upon the blunted taste
Of a senseless, curious clown,
All to gain a gaudy gown !
Should such profanation be ?
No ! in limbo he would see
Mab and all her Fairy train,
Ere submit to such a stain.
Then of patience quite bereft,
Royal dignity all left,
Up he bounded from the ground—
While the trembling daisies round,
Shuddering, shrunk in pallid fear,
Dreading Oberon's words to hear ;
For the King had worked his mind
Into passion almost blind—

High in air he raised his fist ;
When the Queen cried, " Husband, hist !
Hark ! the footsteps of my train
Hither come like pattering rain.
Do not, 'fore your Court, expose
My poor form to cruel blows !"
" By the Gods ! you'll drive me crazed !"
Oberon cried—his features blazed.
" Did I ever in my life
Raise my hand against my wife ?
Thus, with taunts, you still repay
Kindness, and my lenient sway."
These endearments conjugal
Now needs met a sudden fall ;
For the Fairy Court drew near,
In their centre, filled with fear,
Yet half in oblivion lost
By the foaming ale he'd tossed,
From the gleaming pewter can,
With his friend the tailor's man ;

Now, with red and blinking eye
Filled with maudlin gravity,
Which ill hid his growing fears,
'Fore the King a Clown appears.
From King Oberon's brow all wrath
Vanished, like the serpent's path,
When its subtle form is hid,
Stealing the rank grass amid.
While Queen Mab upon his arm
Rested, as to shield from harm—
By a mortal touch profaned—
The dear lord who o'er her reigned.
Soon the silence Oberon broke,
And to Sib the Fairy spoke.
“What is this unseemly jest
That breaks on our royal rest?
Why bring here this drunken Clown,
To tread new-sprung flowrets down,
With his clumsy hob-nailed shoon
Trampling on the sweets of June?”

Shall we scourge with thistles keen
From the presence of our Queen,
Frighted by your clamorous shout,
Your whole rude, unmannered rout?"

Here a glance of mortal sin,
Something 'tween a scowl and grin,
Not of fondness, as he meant,
Towards his royal Spouse he sent.
Pausing for a seemly space,
Sib bent 'neath the frowning face ;
Then with faltering tongue, began
To relate, how the poor man,
Wandering, was by Fairies found,
On a piece of marshy ground ;
Thither lured by tapers bright,
They had brought their path to light.
He a Cobbler was by trade,
And two tiny shoes had made,
Which he carried in his hand ;
And in vain the Fairy band

Had the little slippers tried ;
For too long, or all too wide,
Had each Fairy found her feet.
Then they deemed the slippers neat
Had for royal Mab been made ;
Though the Cobbler stoutly said
That to maid of mortal mould
He his tiny freight had sold.
With a high imperious look,
Mab her well shaped slipper shook—
A curled leaf a moth had knit,
Labouring long the Queen to fit—
From the royal foot and cried,
“Bring the shoes, they shall be tried,”
But in vain the Fairy strains ;
Nought but heat rewards her pains ;
And, with ruth, abashed she feels
She can ne'er get on the heels ;
There the straining slipper clings,
While a laugh from Oberon rings.

Then with wrath the Sovereign burned,
To the trembling Clown she turned,
Spurned the slippers from her feet ;
Scorn for royalty unmeet,
Flashing in her blazing eyes,
As in choking voice she cries—
“ Ill betide thy ugly face !
Who our foot would fain disgrace.
This I know is Oberon's act ;
He and thou are slyly pact,
Thus before the Court entire,
To contemn what all admire.
Or thou'st tried for fancy's sake,
With microscope^{ic} eyes to make
Shoes so small, the like of which
Ne'er before held mortal stitch.”
Meekly bowed, the Cobbler said,
“ Madam, as I live, a Maid
Dwells near by your Fairy hold,
To whom I these slippers sold.”

“Now,” broke in the haughty Queen,
“This fair maid shall sure be seen.
If they fit not, my whole Court
Of thy carcass shall make sport.
Puck shall pinch thee black and blue,
Thorns and nettles pierce thee through ;
Nightmare Gull thy bosom ride ;
Blight thy corn and kine betide ;
Every ill that Fairies know,
On thy hated head shall flow.
Should they fit, our blessing take ;
From this night thy fortune make.
Now unto that lady fair
Bend thy steps, and dog beware!”
Quick as wink, the Fairy Court
Changed its shape to other sort,
Oberon now a bulky bat,
On his back his Consort sat,
Like a yellow butterfly
Sailing through the moonlit sky.

Puck a mighty beetle rolled,
And a ball before him bowled ;
Rush a dragon sailed at ease ;
Some were moths, and some were fleas ;
Each changed to an insect form
As to Julia's door they swarm :
Entered with the man of shoes,
And ranged 'round their mirthful crews.
Beaming like the morning light,
'Mid them sat the Lady bright.
All unconscious of the Sprites
Whom her mortal form delights ;
Radiant with those wondrous charms,
That had beaten love's alarms
On a band of human hearts,
Without efforts, without arts.
Every feature was a trap
By which gazers met mishap—
Pitfalls in her rosy cheek,
Snares within her tresses sleek,

Poison in her violet breath,
'Tween her lips lurked honied death,
Mantraps in her lily hand,
But her eyes who could withstand?
They were armed with very fangs,
Cause of many cruel pangs;
Barbed with love's most deadly darts,
Bright as those which Phœbus starts
From his sounding bow, when day
Shoots o'er the eastern hills its ray;
Full of mischiefs, full of loves,
Now a falcon's, now a dove's.
Such the little, charming witch,
In whose presence stood poor Stitch.
In her hand a butterfly,
Such as Oberon would deny
His Queen, with curious look, she held—
Mab the prize with joy beheld;
And as Stitch towards Julia went,
Down the butterfly she sent.

Quickly Mab, with beaming eyes,
To her bosom hugged the prize,
Owning gratitude and love
To fair Julia far above
Envy, though her mortal foot
Should slide in the tiny boot.
Now the Clown, o'erwhelmed with fear,
To the lovely Maid drew near,
Shuddering at the awful curse
He Queen Mab had heard rehearse;
Took a foot he scarce could see,
Placed it on his trembling knee,
Then drew forth the tiny kid,
And its latchet slight undid—
Praying in his agony
A Cind'rella she might be—
On the little slipper slips :
Julia turned with scornful lips,
Stamped her foot in anger down,
Raised her finger, as to drown

The rude Clown's apology ;
And unto him thus spoke she—
“Thou hast made my shoes before,
But if e'er within my door
Thy rough figure comes again,
Forth thy back my men shall cane!
This the fault I always find—
Ill beshrew thy stupid mind!
Shall a lady waste her breath
On an ear as deaf as death?
Gave I not especial charge?
Lout, thou'st made my shoes too large!”
Oberon seized a little shoe
As with shouts the Fairies flew.
When her boastful voice Mab raises,
At some flattering Courtier's praises,
And she struts with regal state,
In her full blown pride elate,
High he lifts the tiny shoe ;
When her glory melts, like dew

From the sun-kissed rose's cheek,
And she shrinks to gestures meek.
Fortunes great poor Stitch befell ;
As his knightly shield can tell—
Argent moon on field of blue,
Crested with a proper shoe ;
Underneath this legend writ,
Ex minimo maximum fit.

Merry sang the monks in Ely,
When king Canúte was sailing by ;
“ Row near the land, Knights,” said the king,
“ And let us hear these friars sing.”

•

ATHELSTAN'S VICTORY AT BRUNANBURH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON.

In the year 938, Anlaf king of Ireland, leagued with Constantine king of Scotland, and numerous other allies, entered the river Humber, with a strong fleet, for the purpose of subduing Athelstan king of the West Saxons. They were met near Brunanburh by Athelstan and his brother Edmund, with their allies the Mercians, and after a desperate battle the invaders were completely routed. This song, the Chevy Chase of the Saxons, was written in celebration of the victory. As this rude but curious gem of our ancestral poetry must necessarily have escaped the notice of the general reader, I have ventured it before the public, in a more modern form, at the risk of being laughed at, by the learned, for my clumsy setting.

Here Athelstan, giver
Of bracelets to Earls,
The lord of bold Barons,
The slayer of churls,
With Edmund his brother,
Undimmed glories gained,
When on their fierce foemen
Their red weapons rained.
They tore the gay banners,
The shield's wall they clove,
And showed how the lineage
Of dead Edward throve ;
As often, before this,
They'd proved in the field
Their flesh-biting weapons
The country could shield.
They chased the fair Scotchmen
The sounding field o'er,
And mingled their sweat with
The fast streaming gore.

Nor ceased the fierce flowing
Of warrior's blood,
From the uprising sun
Till sunk in the flood
The bright taper of God—
The ruler of day
To his evening seat in
The west fled away.
There lay the stern Northmen
Struck down by the darts,
Nor could their tough targets
Preserve their rude hearts.
The Scotchmen grew weary
Of battle's red fray,
And turned their sick faces
In terror away.
Then rallied the Saxon's
Victorious band,
And drove their loathed foemen
Along the brown strand ;

The fugitives hewing,
With swords whose keen steel
The war-smiths had sharpened
Upon the stone wheel.
Nor was Mercia backward
In warfare that day;
But in the rude grapple,
The eager hand play,
Fierce Anlaf encountered,
Who o'er the rough wave,
Sought England in gallies,
Dread battle to brave.
'Mid heaps of the Scotchmen,
And bold northern churls,
Five Monarchs were sleeping,
With seven brave Earls,
The leaders of Anlaf;
By swords soothed to rest,
When Saxa's stout war-smiths
In crowds on them pressed,

King Anlaf escaping,
Avoided the fray ;
And o'er the brown billows
His ships flew away.
Then fled to far Scotland
The wise Constantine ;
The last of his lineage,
The last of a line
Whose heroes, in glory
Their stern fate had met,
At head of their kindred,
By foemen beset.
The hoarse din of Hilda,*
The gay bannered host,
The sword's deadly commerce,
The king cannot boast ;
For last of his offspring,
The Prince, flaxen haired,
Sole heir of his kingdom,
The foe had not spared :

* Hilda—the goddess of battle.

By sword blows down beaten,
His child of the blade,
In Brunanburh's slaughter,
Great Hilda had laid.
Nor can Anlaf exult
With his warriors left ;
For Edward's descendants
Their glories have reft ;
Where joined they in combat,
Where banners were rent,
Where arrows were meeting,
Where armies were blent ;
And loudly the havoc
Incessantly raged,
As in their wild joyaunce
The Princes engaged.
The Northmen departed
The turbid sea o'er,
And backward in sorrow
Towards Ireland bore—

The dart's dreary relics,
The remnant of those
Whose fleetness had saved them,
Unscathed, from their foes,
In long, nailéd gallies
Sailed Dublin to seek.
While Athelstan gaily,
And prince Edmund eke,
Sought, shouting in triumph,
The West Saxon land ;
And left their foes' corses
Upon the red strand,
To glut the black raven,
The beaked eagle bold,
The greedy war-falcon,
And wolf of the wold.
Nor ever such slaughter
This island befell,
As Scalds of past ages*
In chronicles tell,

* The Scalds were the Minstrels of the Anglo-Saxons.

Since Angles and Saxons,
Earls famous in war,
In long, rocking gallies
The broad waves swept o'er ;
Then fell warlike Welshmen
By edge of the brand,
And the Angles and Saxons
Strode lords of the land.

FRAGMENT FROM BEOWULF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON.

If death from the fierce shock of battle should
take me,

My corse from the red field of slaughter ye'll
bear;

Remember a grave in the valley to make me,
And bury your iron clad warrior there.

Let none from the field of my glory returning,
Pause o'er me and mournfully lean on the spear;
But while the hot blood in each bosom is burning,
Sing o'er me the feast song, and quaff the
brown beer.

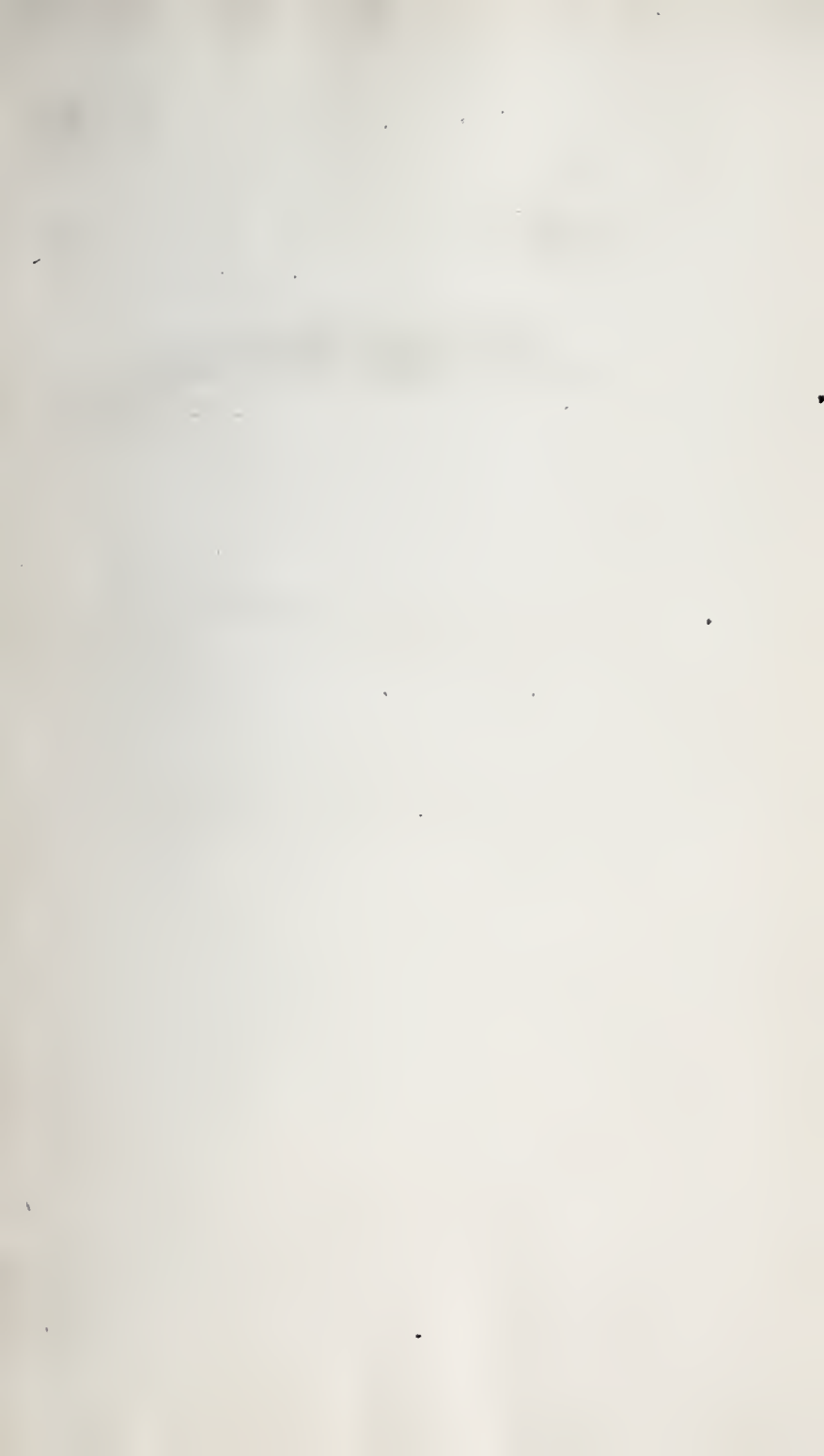
Let my hillock be marked with the simple wild-
flower ;

Nor care what the fate of my body may be ;
But if Hilda withdraws me in battle's dark hour,
To Higelac* bear these rich garments for me :

The richest the gay loom of Veland hath woven ;
Their splendor surpasses the breaking of day !
My faith to my kinsman and country I've proven,
The face of stern Fortune can turn as it may !

* Higelac—king of Jutland, the kinsman of Beowulf.

THE END.





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